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Podcasting Historias: Public Outreach through Digital Storytelling in Iberian History

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Podcasting Historias: Public Outreach through Digital Storytelling in Iberian History

Cover Page Footnote

Thank you to Andrew Lee and Andrea Davis for putting together this special issue; Edward Collins for his thoughtful and detailed responses to my questions; Maria Carreras, A. Katie Harris, David Messenger, and James Stout for providing feedback on their experiences as podcast guests; Chris Gratien for giving permission to cite his manuscript on podcasting; and Taylor Gray for help with editing.

Podcasting Historias: Public Outreach through Digital Storytelling in Iberian History

Foster Chamberlin

Podcasts, serialized collections of audio files that are available for online listening and/or download and that contain content adapted to the serialized digital format, have already experienced tremendous growth as a form of online media, and there is still plenty of room for further expansion.¹ Podcasting presents an opportunity for historians, including those of Iberian history, to make their scholarship available to a growing audience that already numbers in the millions.² This article considers how Iberian historians are doing so now through podcasting (concentrating on resources in English) and how they can continue to grow these efforts in the future. While previous studies have focused on podcasting as an educational tool, this article will explore the medium as public history, as a means of making one's work available to a wider audience. By understanding their podcasting work as part of the digital humanities, academic podcasters in Iberian history can generate original scholarship that appeals to a broader public while maintaining academic rigor. Unbound by the strictures of traditional academic publishing, podcasters can go beyond simply recording classroom lectures and instead take the time to prepare interactive, alternative academic content that is both informative and entertaining.

The article will proceed by first the definitions of the digital humanities and podcasting, along with the advantages and disadvantages of podcasting, in order then to enumerate the ways in which understanding podcasting as part of the digital

¹ According to the pollster Edison Research, this year seventy-three million Americans ages twelve and older, or 26% of the population, listen to podcasts on at least a monthly basis, and this percentage has almost tripled since 2008, when the annual survey began. The possibility of further growth is suggested by the fact that average American spends four hours per day listening to audio, but right now Americans devote only 4% of that time to podcasts whereas they devote 50% to traditional radio. Those who listened to a podcast within 24 hours of when the survey was taken spent 33% of their time listening to podcasts. These statistics are based on a randomized telephone survey of 2,000 people conducted in January and February of 2018. "The Podcast Consumer 2018", *Latest News* (blog), Edison Research, April 19, 2018, <https://www.edisonresearch.com/podcast-consumer-2018/>. The growth rate in Europe appears to be similar. For example, the number of downloads of BBC podcasts per year more than quadrupled from 2007 to 2014, with sixty million in 2007 and 288 million in 2014. Tiziano Bonini, "The 'Second Age' of Podcasting: Reframing Podcasting as a New Digital Mass Medium," *Quaderns del CAC* 18, no. 41 (July 2015): 24, https://www.academia.edu/14504222/The_Second_Age_of_Podcasting_reframing_Podcasting_as_a_New_Digital_Mass_Medium.

² By Iberian history, I mean the history of Spain and Portugal and their empires and the history of the peoples and political entities, past and present, within the modern-day borders of these two countries.

humanities can allow academics to take full advantage of this medium. Podcasting can be digital humanities in the truest sense of the word because allows for original content creation and generates new opportunities for scholarly exchange using computers. Academic institutions need to recognize these merits and encourage podcasting by providing financial support and opportunities for professional advancement to academic podcasters. As this article is one of the first to discuss podcasting as part of the digital humanities, I hope that it will be of broader interest beyond historians of Spain and Portugal. Next, I will review several current popular history podcasts, academic podcasts, and podcasts specializing in Iberian history with the hope that Iberian history podcasters may learn from these successful examples the importance of engaging, narrative storytelling, relating content to current events, and of using high-quality audio and multiple voices. Finally, I will suggest ways in which motivated scholars can expand the footprint of Iberian history by presenting the latest research in the field in an original and accessible format through podcasting.

Defining the Digital Humanities and Podcasting

Defining the Digital Humanities

In the late 2000s and early 2010s, as more and more scholars began to describe themselves as practitioners of the digital humanities (DH) due to the rapidly growing popularity of the field, a furious debate ensued within the DH community as to how exactly to define the term “digital humanities” or, as DH polemicist Stephen Ramsay puts it, to ask “who’s in and who’s out.”³ In essence, there are three ways in which scholars can practice the humanities on a computer. One can:

1. use computational tools to help conduct one’s research
2. use computers to help diffuse one’s research
3. study the effects that the use of computers is having on humanities scholarship⁴

In order to be useful, a definition must be broad enough to open the field of digital humanities to unanticipated forms of scholarship without including simply everything humanities-related that is done on a computer. Therefore, definitions of

³ Stephen Ramsay, “Who’s In and Who’s Out,” in *Defining Digital Humanities: A Reader*, ed. Melissa Terras, Julianne Nyhan and Edward Vanhoutte (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 239-41.

⁴ These categories echo Dave Parry’s study of DH definitions on the “A Day in the Life of the Digital Humanities” website, in which he writes, “there are at least two digital humanities: one that sees the digital as a set of tools to be applied to humanistic inquiry (design, project, tools, data) and another that sees the digital as an object of study (social media, digital games, mobile computing).” “The Digital Humanities or a Digital Humanism,” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 433.

the digital humanities exclude the most basic uses of computers such as only using a word processor to write a paper or reading a digitalized document online.⁵ Many definitions include the third category of study, which I consider to be “metacognition” or thinking about the thinking one is doing (in this case with computers), in order to make this distinction and clarify that the digital humanities is more than just traditional humanities done on a computer.⁶ Thus, the debate about definitions is not about whether metacognition is part of the digital humanities, but rather about whether metacognition *must* be part of one’s work, as well as to what extent the first two categories mentioned above should count. The Wikipedia definition of digital humanities represents the closest one can get to a consensus definition of the term: “an area of scholarly activity at the intersection of computing or digital technologies and the disciplines of the humanities. It includes the systematic use of digital resources in the humanities, as well as the reflection on their application.”⁷ Nevertheless, some DHers believe that the definition must demand a stricter barrier to entry into the club. Ramsay caused a stir when he remarked at the 2011 convention of the Modern Language Association that you have to be able to code or at least to be building something (what exactly is unclear) to be a DHer, thereby emphasizing the first category outlined above at the expense of the other two.⁸ How well podcasting fits into these different ideas about what the digital humanities are will be discussed below.

While historians were largely absent from these digital humanities debates of the 2000s and early 2010s, which were dominated by literary scholars, historians were interesting in using computers for mapping and diffusing their work to broader

⁵ Ramsay, “Who’s In and Who’s Out,” 240 and Parry, “Digital Humanities or a Digital Humanism,” 431.

⁶ Although, Fred Gibbs, in a study of 170 definitions of “digital humanities” submitted to a wiki on the University of Alberta’s Text Analysis Portal for Research site, found that big-tent definitions that amount to essentially “the application of technology to humanities work” were by far the most common. “Digital Humanities Definitions by Type,” in *Defining Digital Humanities*, 289-91.

⁷ “Digital Humanities,” *Wikipedia*, last modified December 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_humanities. Matthew Kirschenbaum recommends the Wikipedia definition (although he is referring to an earlier version) because it represents contributions from “individuals closely associated with the digital humanities.” “What is Digital Humanities and What’s It Doing in English Departments?,” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, 4.

⁸ Ramsay, “Who’s In and Who’s Out,” 240-41. Ramsay later expanded on his remarks, while maintaining his essential point, on his blog. “On Building,” *Defining Digital Humanities*. Mark Sample countered Ramsay by arguing that the digital humanities are about sharing rather than building, thereby emphasizing the second category over the first. “The Digital Humanities Is Not About Building, It’s About Sharing,” *Defining Digital Humanities*. As Kathleen Fitzpatrick notes, this debate is part of a larger divide within the humanities between theory and practice. “The Humanities, Done Digitally,” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, 14.

audiences.⁹ As occurred with the digital humanities more generally, the “History Web,” as digital historians Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig call it, is no longer dominated by individuals making their own history websites.¹⁰ Today, of the five most popular history websites according to a website traffic analysis company, only one is affiliated with an academic institution and none are the work of a single individual.¹¹ At the same time, while there are now millions of journal articles about history available online, most of them are behind database paywalls that only academic research libraries can afford to breach.¹² In other words, like the digital humanities more broadly, the “History Web” has institutionalized, but it has done so with its emphasis on public diffusion rather than metacognition. As digital historian Cameron Blevins notes, historians are likely to make their arguments known digitally but are unlikely to develop arguments digitally.¹³ Thus, digital history and the digital humanities are largely talking past each other; they are largely separate disciplines.¹⁴ Podcasting, however, can bridge this gap.

Defining Podcasting

The idea of streaming audio files over the internet, “internet radio,” developed in the mid-1990s and grew quickly in the late 1990s as broadband made it more feasible. Podcasting is similar to internet radio in that it consists of audio files streamed over the internet, but the difference lies in a type of web feed developed in the early 2000s, Rich Site Summary or Real Simple Syndication (RSS).¹⁵ RSS allows aggregator applications or “podcatchers” to detect automatically when new content, often in the form of serialized audio, is available and notify users. Instead of streaming continuously, podcasters can release their

⁹ For example, Parry writes that “computers inaugurate a school of critique, a new series of tools through which we can analyze texts,” ignoring the fact that text analysis is just one of many types of new tools computers offer scholars in the humanities. “The Digital Humanities or a Digital Humanism,” 431. Stephen Robertson, “The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History,” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, ed. Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/76>.

¹⁰ Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering Preserving, Presenting the Past on the Web* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006).

¹¹ [History.com](http://history.com) and warhistoryonline.com are owned by for-profit companies, ushistory.org and ancient.eu by non-profit organizations. [Historynewsnetwork.org](http://historynewsnetwork.org), while also a non-profit organization, is hosted by George Washington University. “List of the 20 Most Popular History Websites,” Aelieve, 2018, <https://insights.aelieve.com/website-rankings/reference/best-history-websites/>.

¹² Meg Foster, “Online and Plugged In?: Public History and Historians in the Digital Age,” *Public History Review* 21 (2014): 7-8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1cn6thb.29>.

¹³ Cameron Blevins, “Digital History’s Perpetual Future Tense,” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, 314.

¹⁴ Robertson argues that it is necessary to delineate these the differences between disciplines within the digital humanities, particularly digital history and digital literary studies. “Differences between Digital Humanities.”

¹⁵ Bonini, “Second Age’ of Podcasting,” 21.

content periodically and automatically notify listeners, who can then listen at any time. Podcasting developed alongside the RSS specification, but the term itself was coined by a *Guardian* journalist in 2004 to suggest broadcasting over iPods.¹⁶ Indeed, the iPod (introduced in 2001) popularized listening to .mp3 format audio on portable devices, thereby allowing digital audio downloaded from the internet to be consumed anywhere. But Apple's inclusion of podcasting support as a standard feature of the iTunes media player in 2004 was the key step that made audio content on RSS feeds automatically accessible from mp3 players. With the release of the iPhone three years later, users could have their podcasts available to them everywhere they brought their mobile phones.¹⁷

In the early days of podcasting, there was a debate about whether it was simply radio on the internet or if it was truly a new kind of audio media. I would define a podcast as "a serialized collection of audio files, available for online listening and/or download, that contains content adapted to the serialized digital format." This definition includes broadcast radio shows that are adapted to the serialized online format of podcasts but excludes broadcast radio stations that are simply streamed online. In other words, the content of a podcast could be the same as that of a traditional radio show, but the distribution mechanism is distinct. The definition also seeks to find a middle ground between narrow and broad definitions. On the one hand, a definition might include all audio files on the internet, but then the term "podcast" does not delineate anything distinct.¹⁸ I believe that the serialized or episodic nature of the files is what makes podcasts unique, distinguishing them from, say, internet radio or a stand-alone clips. On the other hand, many definitions require a podcast to be distributed by an RSS feed, but my definition allows for other forms of distribution as well, such as simply posting episodes on a website.¹⁹ An RSS feed is not necessary for having a podcast, but it

¹⁶ "The Man Who Accidentally Invented the Word 'Podcast'," Ben Hammersley, interviewed by Miranda Sawyer, *Radio 4 in Four*, podcast audio, November 20, 2015, https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p038m811?ns_mchannel=social&ns_campaign=bbc_radio_4&ns_source=twitter&ns_linkname=radio_and_music. The *New Oxford American Dictionary* named "podcast" the word of the year just a year after the word's invention. "Oxford Dictionary Names 'Podcast' 2005 Word of the Year," *Wired*, December 6, 2005, <https://www.wired.com/2005/12/oxford-dictionary/>.

¹⁷ Enrico Menduni, "Four Steps in Innovative Radio Broadcasting: From Quick Time to Podcasting," *The Radio Journal – International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media* 5, no. 1 (2007): 9-18.

¹⁸ Peter Alegi, "Podcasting the Past: *Africa Past and Present* and (South) African History in the Digital Age," *South African Historical Journal* 64, no. 2 (2012): 207, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2011.640344> and Andrew Dubber, *Radio in the Digital Age* (Malden: Polity Press, 2013), 56.

¹⁹ Kris M. Markman and Caroline E. Sawyer, "Why Pod? Further Explorations of the Motivation for Independent Podcasting," *Journal of Radio and Audio Media* 21, no. 1 (Apr. 2014): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19376529.2014.891211>.

is necessary for having much of a listenership since all the major podcatchers, such as Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, and Google Play, rely on this technology. Other definitions include video files, but I consider vodcasts a separate (although related) category because video content is both produced and consumed quite differently.²⁰ Finally, I state that to be a podcast the audio files must contain content designed with the serialized digital format in mind. And so, for example, releasing a musical album online would not be a podcast because the content is not made for or adapted to the serialized online format. In practice, the vast majority of podcasts contain primarily spoken word content in the form of serialized shows designed for online release, but music recorded for podcasting purposes or recordings of public events repackaged as podcasts could fall under my definition of the term.²¹

As was the case with the digital humanities, early scholarship on podcasting waxed enthusiastic about its potential to democratize audio media, what with radio dominated by a few large corporations.²² Virtually anyone could produce a podcast with as little as a smartphone and broadcast it to the world with only some elementary computer skills. Its low barrier for entry meant that the podcasting world could contain a multiplicity of perspectives, whereas traditional radio stations (at least on the FM band) tended to shy away from viewpoints outside of the mainstream so that they would not jeopardize their profits. As an early evangelizing article about podcasting says, “part of the reason that podcasting has taken off so quickly is that there’s very little worth listening to on the radio.”²³ The downside was that early podcasts were amateur, low-budget affairs that without a revenue stream were far from the level of recording and editing quality achieved by professional broadcasters on traditional radio. After a few years of experimentation, most media companies lost interest in podcasting because of its lack of profitability, but in 2012 some of the most famous shows from American public radio became podcasts supported by crowdfunding. Media scholar Tiziano Bonini dubs this trend the beginning of the “second age” of podcasting, when the

²⁰ The definitions of Wikipedia, Chris Gratien and Oliver McGarr all include video. “Podcast,” *Wikipedia*, last edited December 1, 2018, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast>; Chris Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities: An Introduction to Scholarly Podcasting,” Google Docs manuscript, accessed June 6, 2018; and Oliver McGarr, “A Review of Podcasting in Higher Education: Its Influence on the Traditional Lecture,” *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 25, no. 3 (2009): 309, <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.1136>.

²¹ To be precise, according to a 2014 study, 92.5% of podcasts are talk-based. Markman and Sawyer, “Why Pod?,” 27. In contrast, the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition explicitly includes music. *OED Online*, s.v. “Podcast, n.,” accessed June 20, 2018, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/273003?rskey=5llmIM&result=1&isAdvanced=false>.

²² Bonini, “‘Second Age’ of Podcasting,” 22-23 contains a review of this literature.

²³ Gardner Campbell, “There’s Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education,” *EDUCAUSE Review* (November/December 2005): 38, <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2005/1/theres-something-in-the-air-podcasting-in-education>.

medium began to professionalize.²⁴ With their professional hosts and production teams, these podcasts became so popular that advertisers began to take interest, particularly beginning in 2016 after the podcast *Serial*, a spinoff of the National Public Radio (NPR) show *This American Life*, in 2014 became the fastest podcast to reach five million downloads.²⁵ Commercial podcasting companies like Radiotopia and Panoply began, and mainstream media firms started releasing dozens of podcast series. Today, the most popular podcasts are produced by traditional radio broadcasters like the British Broadcasting Corporation and NPR or are owned by for-profit companies.²⁶

Podcasting as Digital Humanities

Academics were particularly interested in the potential podcasting had for educational use, and so there was a flurry of scholarship on this subject in the second half of the 2000s.²⁷ Historians also quickly saw the potential of podcasting as a means of distributing their scholarship to the public, but there has been much less research on using podcasting for this purpose.²⁸ There is also the question of whether or not podcasts should even be considered as part of the digital humanities. DHers do not explicitly exclude podcasting, but the medium has not been a focus of their attentions either, which tend to fall on text mining on the computational side and on online exhibits on the public scholarship side, for instance. While there is no question that podcasting fits into big-tent definitions of the digital humanities, Stephen Ramsay maintains that “for the most part, people agree that having a blog does not make you a digital humanist,” which suggests podcasts, in essence audio blogs, are also excluded.²⁹ In addition, as discussed above, many definitions demand metacognition as well. Podcasting can certainly fit this requirement; however, it must be more than simply posting a lecture or the reading of a journal article online. It must be designed with the advantages and disadvantages of the medium in mind, whether that means catering to a non-academic audience, incorporating different speakers and music into the recording, or providing supplemental materials on a website, for example.³⁰ And so, if metacognition is involved, there is no reason why blogs as well as podcasts should not be considered

²⁴ Bonini, “‘Second Age’ of Podcasting.”

²⁵ K.S.C., “Easy Listening: 2016: the year the podcast came of age,” *The Economist*, April 7, 2016, <https://www.economist.com/prospero/2016/04/07/2016-the-year-the-podcast-came-of-age>.

²⁶ As early as June 2012, one third of the iTunes top one hundred podcasts were from traditional broadcasters. Markman and Sawyer, “Why Pod?,” 20.

²⁷ McGarr, “Review of Podcasting in Higher education” is a review of this literature.

²⁸ There is Alegi, “Podcasting the Past” and Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities.” John F. Barber, “Digital Storytelling: New Opportunities for Humanities Scholarship and Pedagogy,” *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 3 (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2016.1181037> also contains some discussion of podcasting.

²⁹ Ramsay, “Who’s In and Who’s Out,” 240.

³⁰ Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities,” 9.

digital humanities. While podcasters do not need to code (although coding can certainly enhance a podcast's website and RSS feed), podcasts also satisfy Ramsay's demand that DHers be "building" something. By definition, podcasters build a series of episodes, and most build accompanying websites as well. In other words, as long as podcasters are not simply reproducing materials that already exist in another form, they clearly fit the bill as practitioners of digital humanities. Within the DH umbrella, digital history and public history are more precise terms that describe what historians are doing when they use podcasts to allow their scholarship to reach a broader audience.

So if podcasting is one option for doing digital history, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the medium? Many aspects of Cohen and Rosenzweig's categorization of the advantages of digital history more generally works surprisingly well for podcasting.³¹

- **Accessibility:** This is perhaps the most important advantage of the podcast medium. The internet allows for a potentially global audience, while previously most public historians operated only on the local level.³² The RSS feed also allows for automatic distribution to subscribers, and portable devices permit for listening anywhere.³³ Whereas written material requires dedicated reading time, podcasts can be consumed anywhere while the listener is doing something else simultaneously. And while most books and journal articles require purchase, library access, or database subscription to view, most podcasts are available for free to anyone. Such resources are particularly important to academics who do not hold positions at research universities with extensive libraries and database subscriptions.³⁴
- **Flexibility:** Most scholarship is published in written form, but audio publishing in the form of a podcast offers some advantages over the written word. Speakers can use inflections in their voices to convey meaning and to increase the audience's interest in the subject.³⁵ Hearing an author speak can make his or her work more memorable for the audience and sometimes the spoken word can convey more emotion than printed text.³⁶ On a webpage, the podcast can also be combined with other forms of media like text, images, or video to enhance the learning experience.
- **Diversity:** Whereas traditional radio (at least on the AM and FM bands) offers at most a few dozen stations and almost no scholarly content, let alone

³¹ Cohen and Rosenzweig, *Digital History*, 3-8.

³² Gratien, "Podcasts and the Public Humanities," 2.

³³ Campbell, "Podcasting in Education," 38.

³⁴ Alegi, "Podcasting the Past," 215.

³⁵ More on this in Campbell, "Podcasting in Education," 42.

³⁶ Gratien, "Podcasts and the Public Humanities," 11.

historical content, the internet makes available thousands of podcasts (in April 2018, Apple listed 525 thousand active podcasts and 18.5 million available episodes) that cover any number of niche topics, most of which would not be of interest to mass market radio stations.³⁷ In addition, the ease with which one may produce a podcast means podcasters need be experts only in their subject material, not in audio production as well. In this manner, podcasts (and the internet more generally) allow historians to connect with an audience interested in their areas of specialization easily. This audience that might only number a few people in a particular place but could number in the thousands globally.³⁸

- Interactivity: Although podcasts are a one-way medium in that the audience passively listens to the presenters, the fact that podcasts exist on the internet means that this relationship can easily become two-way through comments on podcast websites and social media posts. Podcasts also encourage collaboration within and between fields and disciplines through comments and, because podcasts are often a team effort, they break historians out of their usual solitary modes of operation.³⁹ Since podcasts are not a traditional form of scholarly publishing, the strictures of any particular discipline need not be adhered to, facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition, since the scope of a podcast is often somewhat broader than the host's area of specialization, hosting a podcast can broaden his or her expertise.⁴⁰

A final advantage that I would add is that since podcasters do not have to meet any of the standards set by peer reviewers or editorial boards, they can experiment freely with this new form of academic self-publishing or focus on publicizing the work of others. A podcast can go from recording to publishing in just a few hours, in contrast to the months (or years) long process required for traditional academic publishing.⁴¹ Therefore, academics can test different arguments and receive feedback much more quickly through the podcast medium. Such experimentation through rapid, non-peer reviewed publishing can be what an academic needs to develop an innovative final product that will pass peer review.⁴²

³⁷ Melissa Locker, "Apple's Podcasts Just Topped 50 Billion All-Time Downloads and Streams," *Fast Company*, April 25, 2018, <https://www.fastcompany.com/40563318/apples-podcasts-just-topped-50-billion-all-time-downloads-and-streams>.

³⁸ Gratien, "Podcasts and the Public Humanities," 2.

³⁹ Chris Gratien, "Digital Media, Collaboration, and Crowdsourcing," in Chris Gratien, Michael Polczyński, and Nir Shafir, "Digital Frontiers of Ottoman Studies," *Journal of the Ottoman Turkish Studies Association* 1, nos. 1-2 (2014): 50, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jotturstuass.1.1-2.37>.

⁴⁰ Alegi, "Podcasting the Past," 219.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 215-16.

⁴² Barber, "Digital Storytelling," 5.

Some of the problems of digital history identified by Cohen and Rosenzweig also hold true for podcasting; although, there are ways to address each of these issues:⁴³

- **Quality:** The ease and low cost of making a podcast leads to diversity of coverage but also of quality in terms of both production and content. Since there is no barrier for entry like peer review in the podcasting world and one cannot easily include citations in a podcast, there is nothing to stop unverified and misleading content from being published. Listeners may have difficulty distinguishing podcasts containing such content from more rigorous ones. To a certain extent, listener discretion is required here, and this is one reason why academics should consider podcasting, so that well-researched content will be available in the podcasting world. To help alleviate the problem of not being able to include citations, podcasting scholars can include suggested reading lists on episode webpages to indicate what sources they are using.⁴⁴ On the technical side, scholars who attempt podcasting without much technical knowledge may produce a poor-quality product that gains few listeners. Therefore, it is important for scholars who are considering podcasting to take the time to acquire and learn the appropriate equipment. Institutional financial and technical support can be a huge advantage in these matters. A podcast with professional production quality will garner more listeners and will earn a legitimacy that will allow it to stand out from less rigorous efforts.
- **Readability:** One does not read a podcast, but listenability is an issue when most podcasters do not have professional recording and editing services available to them. Again, taking time to acquire the necessary skills and obtaining institutional support, if possible, are the keys to listenability. Academic history podcasters may also have trouble adapting their work to an audio format and a broader audience. Listening to other popular history podcasts, being careful to provide background information, and avoiding academic jargon and name dropping can help. Listeners must also be respected, however, talking down to the audience will be counterproductive. Media scholar John F. Barber also points out that podcasts naturally lend themselves to narrative storytelling, and this format can be appealing to listeners, but podcasting historians must be careful that dramatic narration does not take precedence over historical accuracy.⁴⁵
- **Passivity:** There is a danger that some listeners will think they can simply listen to a podcast and receive all the “answers” to a historical problem.

⁴³ Cohen and Rosenzweig, *Digital History*, 8-13.

⁴⁴ Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities,” 12.

⁴⁵ Barber, “Digital Storytelling,” 5.

Podcasting historians can alleviate this problem by presenting historical research as an interpretive process. Instead of simply providing a list of facts, they can discuss historical evidence, bring up multiple interpretations, and leave some historical questions without definitive answers. An exploration of these different elements of the historian's thinking should be more appealing than a droning lecture anyway.

Two other disadvantages to podcasting are that, first, unlike in an academic journal or press, by distributing their work to open platforms like Apple Podcasts or Google Play, academic podcasters are placing "radical trust" in reviewers, who can write anything.⁴⁶ In addition, podcatchers place academic podcasts on the same playing field as everything else with RSS distribution, leaving it up to listeners to distinguish between scholarly podcasts and inaccurate or even deliberately misleading content. Ultimately, academic podcasters can only hope that potential listeners will be able to distinguish between thoughtful reviewers and internet trolls.

A final disadvantage to podcasting for the academic is that podcasts require substantial time to produce, and this labor does not traditionally count towards academic promotion. Fortunately, the current boom in digital humanities is causing many institutions to consider DH projects such as podcasts as professional service, as would be editing an academic journal, for example.⁴⁷ The American Historical Association (AHA) now endorses the consideration of digital scholarship, including "new digital short-form genres such as blogs, social media or multimedia storytelling," towards promotion in its "Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians," but the organization does not specify precisely which forms of digital scholarship should count and how.⁴⁸ Its "Tenure, Promotion, and the Publicly Engaged Academic Historian" report is more specific, suggesting that public history should still be peer reviewed to be considered scholarship, but also suggesting an expanded definition of peer review to include "a broader and more diverse group of peers, many from outside traditional academic departments, working in museums, historic sites, and other sites of mediation between scholars and the public."⁴⁹ One can imagine a podcast approved

⁴⁶ James B. Gardner, "Trust, Risk and Public History: A View from the United States," *Public History Review* 17 (2010): 52-53, <https://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/phrj/article/view/1852>.

⁴⁷ Alegi, "Podcasting the Past," 215.

⁴⁸ "Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians," American Historical Association, June 2015, <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/digital-history-resources/evaluation-of-digital-scholarship-in-history/guidelines-for-the-professional-evaluation-of-digital-scholarship-by-historians>.

⁴⁹ "Tenure, Promotion, and the Publicly Engaged Academic Historian," 04 June 2017, <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/statements-standards-and-guidelines-of-the-discipline/tenure-promotion-and-the-publicly-engaged-academic-historian>.

and sponsored by a foundation, digital humanities center, or museum review board counting as scholarship under this definition. The AHA also recommends increasing service workload distributions if institutions are to encourage work in public history.⁵⁰

All told, the best way to mitigate these dangers while taking full advantage of the possibilities presented by the podcast medium is to practice podcasting as part of the digital humanities, consciously adapting content production to the online environment. Instead of simply reproducing their traditional work online, scholars should consider their podcasting as a new and different form of knowledge creation.⁵¹ As Chris Gratien, one of the founders of the highly successful *Ottoman History Podcast*, writes in a guide he has prepared for academics interested podcasting, “do not merely use your podcast as an outlet for scholarship that happens elsewhere. Make the podcast the place where scholarship happens.”⁵² Historical arguments can be not only repeated but also developed on podcasts.⁵³ Since the digital humanities emphasize interaction and collaboration, podcasters who see themselves as DHers will build interactive websites to accompany their podcasts, counteracting the passivity of the medium and including references for their work. Since the digital humanities emphasize innovation and metacognition, DH podcasters will experiment with storytelling techniques, providing engaging material that will attract listeners while giving them a window into the ways in which professional historians think critically about the past. In so doing, these podcasters will help bring the practice of scholarship into the digital age, help bridge the gap between academia and the public, and, on a more practical level, be more likely to have their efforts rewarded through credit towards academic promotion.

Podcasting Iberian History Today

Popular History Podcasts

Now that the background of the evolution of podcasting as a digital humanity has been established, there remains to be seen what podcasts concerning

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ There can be a confusion of wording here. Mark Sample states that “the heart of the digital humanities is not the production of knowledge; it’s the *reproduction* of knowledge”; whereas, Chris Gratien writes that “podcasting can be more than a means of promoting of academic research and publications; when done right, it has the potential to be a *means of production* itself.” Is podcasting production or reproduction? Academic podcasters are reproducing in that they need not invent totally new arguments online, but, if they are making their arguments in a new way online, then they can also be said to be producing. Indeed, Sample clarifies that “the digital reshapes the representation, sharing, and discussion of knowledge.” “Digital Humanities is not about Building,” 256 and Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities,” 1.

⁵² Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities,” 9.

⁵³ Blevins, “Digital History’s Perpetual Future Tense,” 315-19.

Iberian history are available today. I delineate four types of history podcasts in order to categorize these offerings:

- **Narrative:** These podcasts feature a single presenter (or sometimes two co-hosts) telling a historical story, typically from a written script. Narrative podcasts tend to be more cohesive than the other formats because one or two presenters can control every aspect of the production. Therefore, scholars will often use this format to present their own research in a serialized audio format. One disadvantage to this format is that these podcasts are quite time-consuming to produce because the presenter essentially writes a lengthy research paper for each episode. In addition, while good storytellers can make narrative podcasts exciting to listen to, there is also a danger that the host will drone on about his or her research without collaborators to bring in fresh perspectives.
- **Interview:** In interview podcasts the host interviews different guests about historical topics. This format tends to be less time-consuming to produce because guests will already have extensive knowledge of the topics in question and conversations can unfold organically rather than having to be written out in advance. Interview podcasts have the advantage of constantly bringing in different voices and perspectives, but they may also seem directionless and some guests will inevitably be more skilled at giving interviews than others.
- **Programmatic:** Programmatic podcasts are essentially radio shows in podcast form. Each episode considers a particular topic through a combination of narration, interview clips, readings, and sound effects. These podcasts are usually the most engaging for listeners and fully take advantage of possibilities of the podcast medium. Therefore, most of the podcasts that have the highest numbers of listeners are programmatic. Unfortunately, programmatic podcasts are also the most expensive and time consuming to produce. Professional recording equipment, extensive research and interviewing, field recordings, and advanced editing skills are all required. Therefore, most programmatic podcasts are produced by podcasting companies rather than academic institutions and scholars.
- **Broadcast:** Broadcasts simply make available in podcast format recordings of events that were not specifically designed to be podcasts, usually lectures or conference proceedings such as roundtables. Broadcasts are easy to produce (required no dedicated content creation and minimal editing) but may seem unnatural to listeners when packaged as podcasts and do little to explore the unique features of the medium. Therefore, under many definitions, broadcasts would not be considered digital humanities because they are not really creating anything new and they are not metacognitive.

Nevertheless, they can be an easy way to make scholarly events accessible to people who cannot be physically present.

One can also categorize history podcasts by who is producing them and for whom they are being produced. A podcast can be popular (for the general public, usually produced by podcasting companies), institutional (produced by universities or other educational institutions for more scholarly audiences), or independent (produced by individuals, both professional and amateur historians, for a wide range of audiences). While many an academic may consider popular podcasts under-researched and over-sensationalized, they are worth considering because they can teach the academic podcaster much about how to reach a larger audience. Determining which history podcasts are the most popular is difficult since podcatchers like the iPhone app do not list them simply by popularity and most do not display listenership numbers. The number of Apple Podcasts ratings is suggestive; although, podcasts that have existed for longer will have more ratings and podcasts will have different numbers of listens per rating.

Nevertheless, it is safe to say that *Revisionist History* is the most popular history podcast with 35.2 thousand ratings.⁵⁴ The host, Malcolm Gladwell, is a journalist for *The New Yorker*, and the podcasting network Panoply produces the show. The professionalism of the host and the corporate support behind him are no doubt the keys to *Revisionist History*'s success; Gladwell even boasts an endorsement from the famous documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. The episodes are models of programmatic podcasting—well-researched and heavily produced with various interviews and musical effects spliced in. Reviews attest to effects of this high production value; one writes “it’s truly a delight when something is as original, captivating, and entertaining as this.”⁵⁵ Yet despite *Revisionist History*'s billing as a podcast that “will go back and reinterpret something from the past: an event, a person, an idea. Something overlooked. Something misunderstood,” the focus is not always on the past.⁵⁶ In order to make his shows relatable for listeners, Gladwell instead often chooses topics that center on present-day American concerns, even current events, such as golf or McDonald's French fries, and there is certainly no content regarding the Iberian Peninsula.

The second most popular history podcast is *Dan Carlin's Hardcore History* with 27.9 thousand ratings. *Hardcore History* is a narrative podcast, in which, over a series of several sometimes multi-hour episodes, Carlin examines different historical topics, usually centered on military history. While Carlin, a former traditional radio broadcaster, researches each episode extensively, he is not an expert in any one topic; therefore, most professional historians would find his

⁵⁴ All these reviewer statistics are as of December 8, 2018.

⁵⁵ K0h4ku, “Entertaining and Thoughtful,” *Podcasts*, v. 3.6 (Apple, 2017), June 16, 2016.

⁵⁶ “About Revisionist History,” Panoply, 2018, <http://revisionisthistory.com/about>.

analysis insufficiently versed in the latest interpretations and his comparisons anachronistic. For example, in his only episode on the Iberian world, “Globalization Unto Death- Ferdinand Magellan,” Carlin spends more than half of the episode musing on various questions such as “are white people special?”⁵⁷ Nevertheless, like Gladwell, Carlin can teach academic podcasters that audiences want a good story. His clear voice and powerful storytelling ability make his long episodes fly by and earn him rave reviews from listeners. The review rated most helpful on Apple Podcasts underlines the impact good narrative storytelling can have in a podcast: “Many history podcasts sound like they are simply read from a book or are scattered and incoherent, but Dan sounds as though he is actually having a conversation... with the listener.”⁵⁸ The fact that Carlin is a professional broadcaster and that he owns his own podcasting production company help him achieve this effect, even if, as a consequence, purchase is required to listen to older episodes of the show.⁵⁹

Depending on what one includes in the genre of history, *Stuff You Missed in History Class*, produced by the for-profit website HowStuffWorks, might come in at number three with 11.9 thousand ratings. A narrative podcast, in its current iteration, hosts Tracy V. Wilson and Holly Frey intersperse reading scripts about varied topics in history with brief dialogues reacting to the stories. Wilson and Frey research the episodes, citing their sources on their website. The fact that producing *Stuff You Missed in History Class* is a large part of their jobs explains how Wilson and Frey are able to publish a new episode every few days. The corporate backing comes at the cost of the show being interrupted frequently by advertisements. Among the over 500 episodes now available from this long-running podcast, listeners can find several devoted to topics in the history of Spain and the Spanish Americas.

While academic listeners will find Wilson and Frey’s commentary less bombastic than Carlin’s, the duo’s remarks never extend beyond their general impressions into a realm of analysis that might be considered scholarship. As Table 1 indicates, listeners rate *Stuff You Missed in History Class* somewhat lower than *Hardcore History*. Whereas Carlin enjoys near universal acclaim as “the type of guy you want at your cookout,” the hosts of *Stuff You Missed in History Class* receive frequent criticism for sounding like “sorority girls.”⁶⁰ The contrast is a reminder not to place too much stock in listener ratings, which may be influenced by factors as subjective as the misogynistic tastes of some reviewers.

⁵⁷ Dan Carlin, “Globalization unto Death- Ferdinand Magellan,” *Dan Carlin’s Hardcore History*, podcast, February 27, 2010.

⁵⁸ Deagh Dia, “Simply the Best History Podcast,” *Podcasts*, June 24, 2007.

⁵⁹ “Our Team,” Dan Carlin, 2006-2017, <https://www.dancarlin.com/about/>.

⁶⁰ Yankee-Whisky-Papa, “...And the Rest Was History,” *Podcasts*, June 21, 2007.

Two final popular history podcasts are worth mentioning, *The History of Rome* and *Revolutions*, narrative podcasts that come in at 5.06 thousand and four thousand ratings respectively. The host of these two, Mike Duncan, is an amateur historian who dedicates himself full-time to producing his podcasts.⁶¹ While *The History of Rome* does not concern Iberian history per se, *Revolutions*, which considers nine different revolutionary periods from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, has a twenty-seven-episode series on the wars of independence in the Spanish Americas with a focus on Venezuela. Like Carlin, Duncan is a skilled storyteller whose touches of witticism keep listeners coming back for more of his multipart retellings of these different revolutions. Unlike Carlin, Duncan does not give himself over to speculation and counterfactuals; episodes are straight historical narrations filled with dates and details although little in the way of analysis and interpretation.

Table 1- A Comparison of Some Popular History Podcasts

Name	<i>Revisionist History</i>	<i>Dan Carlin's Hardcore History</i>	<i>Stuff You Missed in History Class</i>	<i>Revolutions</i>
Host(s)	Malcolm Gladwell	Dan Carlin	Tracy V. Wilson and Holly Frey	Mike Duncan
Occupation of Host(s)	Journalist	Broadcaster	Website writers and producers	Self-employed
Type	Programmatic	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative
Sponsorship	Corporate (Panpoly)	Independent (Orator)	Corporate (HowStuffWorks)	Independent
Revenue Source	Advertising	Advertising	Advertising	Donations

⁶¹ "About Me," *Revolutions*, accessed August 10, 2018, http://thehistoryofrome.typepad.com/revolutions_podcast/about-me.html.

Name	<i>Revisionist History</i>	<i>Dan Carlin's Hardcore History</i>	<i>Stuff You Missed in History Class</i>	<i>Revolutions</i>
Number of Apple Podcast Ratings (in thousands)	35.2	27.9	11.9	4
Average Star Rating on Apple Podcasts (out of 5)	4.5	5	4	5
Release Dates	June 2016 to present	July 2006 to present	June 2008 to present	September 2013 to present
Number of Episodes	30	62	About 500	185
Frequency of Episode Release	Weekly during summer	A few per year	Every 2-3 days	weekly

Sources: Data updated from the websites of these podcasts and the Apple Podcast app on December 8, 2018.

Looking at the table above, what can the academic podcaster learn from the most popular history podcasts, none of which are produced by academic historians? First of all, one notices that all four podcasts focus on storytelling (three I classify as narrative podcasts and *Revisionist History* is even more invested in storytelling with its programmatic format). Second of all, four of the five podcasters mentioned are media professionals of some kind. They recognize that podcast listeners want a good story that does not take too long (about thirty-forty minutes, except for Carlin, whose forceful personality can maintain listeners' attention for longer periods), and they have provided audiences with just that. Crafting that story takes substantial resources. Two of the four podcasts have corporate backing and three of the four include advertisements to generate revenue. This revenue then allows the hosts of all of these podcasts to dedicate substantial portions of their time to podcast production. In other words, knowingly or not, these podcasters are practicing their craft as part of the digital humanities; they are metacognitive in that they recognize

that podcast listeners have unique demands, namely an engaging narrative story, and they create podcasts that meet this demand in unique ways. While none of these podcasts reach the standards of scholarship many academics would demand, academic podcasters can learn from these successes that listeners are looking for podcasters who take the time and gather the resources to produce a quality product that tells an interesting story.

General Academic History Podcasts

Many of the academics who have ventured into podcasting have also done so with institutional support, but from educational institutions rather than for-profit companies. These days, it seems hard to find a university that does not offer a podcast of some kind, yet amongst all this content, coverage of Iberian history is limited and scattered, as these shows often consider a wide range of topics. Three prominent examples that offer at least some Iberian history are the University of Oxford podcasts (in which Iberian content is scattered among various series), *15 Minute History* from the University of Texas at Austin, and *A History of the World in 100 Objects* from BBC Radio 4 and the British Museum. Oxford's offerings are impressive, consisting of thousands of episodes from virtually every discipline, with eighty-seven from the Faculty of History.⁶² By my count, there are twelve episodes concerning Iberian history, three from the Department of Policy and Intervention and the rest from the Faculty of History, including the four-part series "Spain: 1959-1992" by Mariana Perez de Arcos. Coverage is varied—everything from the War of the Spanish Succession to furniture in Portugal—and includes some prominent names in the field such as John Elliott and Charles Powell. However, the podcasts are in broadcast format, that is, they are recordings of lectures, panels, and interviews not produced expressly for the podcast medium. While this format can give the podcasts the sense of authenticity characteristic of live recordings, the recordings can also be cumbersome to listen to as podcasts when references are made to slides podcast listeners cannot see or jokes made with live audience members podcast listeners cannot hear, for instance. All told, Oxford has created a remarkable online podcast archive, but, without producing content expressly for the podcast medium, it falls short of doing digital humanities through podcasting.

UT Austin's Hemispheres international outreach program and Not Even Past website offer a unique twist on the interview podcast by rotating interviewers and interviewees, all linked to the UT Austin Department of History, and by keeping to the short 15-minute length. Thus, the podcast brings as much benefit to the producers as the listeners, encouraging the department's members to discuss research with each other and to practice summarizing it for a popular audience. As it happens, the department's strength in Atlantic history has meant that six episodes

⁶² University of Oxford Podcasts, 2011-2016, <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/>.

of the series deal with Iberian history in some way. While the discussions are thoroughly academic, the high production quality provided by the university's Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services and the short-and-sweet format have attracted a substantial following (the podcast has received 134 ratings on Apple Podcasts).⁶³

Finally, BBC Radio 4 and the British Museum's *A History of the World in 100 Objects* features four episodes dealing with Iberian history. Here again, institutional support permits a programmatic podcast that combines narration, on-site recordings, music, and multiple interviews to tell a history of the world through different artifacts in the British Museum. This engaging and creative approach, combined with the convenient fifteen-minute duration of the episodes, has given the podcast remarkable popularity (666 ratings). The episodes on the European age of exploration, while featuring objects mainly originating from the American civilizations, are relevant to the history of the Spanish Empire.

Table 2- A Comparison of Three General Academic History Podcasts from Educational Institutions

Name	University of Oxford Podcasts	<i>15 Minute History</i>	<i>A History of the World in 100 Objects</i>
Host(s)	Various	Various	Neil MacGregor (Director of the British Museum)
Type	Broadcast	Interview	Programmatic
Sponsorship	Institutional (University of Oxford)	Institutional (UT Austin)	Institutional (BBC Radio 4 and the British Museum)
Release Dates	October 2008 to present	October 2012 to present	January 2010 to October 2010
Number of Episodes	6,400 (as of October 2013)	113	100
Frequency of Episode Release	Multiple daily	Monthly	About every two days

⁶³ "About Us," 15 Minute History, accessed August 10, 2018, <https://15minutehistory.org/about/>.

Name	University of Oxford Podcasts	<i>15 Minute History</i>	<i>A History of the World in 100 Objects</i>
Typical Duration	20-60 minutes	15-30 minutes	14 minutes
Number of Episodes Concerning Iberian History	12	6	4

Sources: Data updated from the websites of these podcasts and the Apple Podcast app on December 8, 2018.

Podcasts hosted by educational institutions have propelled academics into the podcasting world, providing the resources necessary to produce quality recordings. Many, such as *15 Minute History* and *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, are also metacognitive, experimenting with new ways to present history to online listeners. Yet these institutions' efforts to showcase the work of many different scholars can result in podcasts that seem scattered and directionless, hence the light smattering of content regarding Iberian history hidden among the hundreds of episodes these programs produce.

Specialized Academic History Podcasts

Academic podcasts that specialize in particular geographical fields of history are less numerous, but a few prominent success stories demonstrate that even relatively specialized podcasts can win large audiences. Outside of American history, the first series to take-off in this genre, back in 2008, was *Africa Past and Present*, an interview podcast that is funded by Michigan State University's Department of History and Matrix digital humanities research institute. The hosts, Peter Alegi and Peter Limb, are both professors at Michigan State and leaders in the school's digital history initiatives (including the popular H-Net history forum). Their stated goal is "to make African history and African studies available to specialists outside research universities and to the broader public."⁶⁴ To do this, they interviewed guests, many visiting Michigan State's African Studies program, about their research, conducting what another Michigan State professor, David Bailey, describes as "the most demanding form of a book review – with the author responding in real time to your observations."⁶⁵ While the audience for audio African history book reviews might seem limited, the podcast enjoyed meteoric success. The average number of downloads per episode grew rapidly in the first years of the program from 1,053 in 2008 to 2,117 in 2009 and 7,500 in 2010.

⁶⁴ Alegi, "Podcasting the Past," 207-08.

⁶⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 216.

Downloads came from seventy countries and most were probably for educational purposes.⁶⁶ While these numbers are not as high as even the number of ratings the most popular history podcasts receive on Apple Podcasts (*Africa Past and Present* has only eighteen ratings on the platform), *Africa Past and Present* was consistently introducing its guests to audiences numbering in the thousands, a feat rarely achieved by a conference paper or academic article.⁶⁷

Ottoman History Podcast marks another success for a specialized academic interview podcast. Two graduate students at Georgetown University, Chris Gratien and Emra Safa Gürkan, began the program in 2011, and it has since expanded into a massive project involving four editors and twenty-one other team members, with Gratien still acting as producer.⁶⁸ The podcast's mission is similar to that of *Africa Past and Present*, it strives to offer "a multivocal and inclusive discussion of history in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere that showcases the numerous perspectives on the past within our field of study" and "to make discussion about the past lively and accessible to wide audiences."⁶⁹ Also like *Africa Past and Present*, *Ottoman History Podcast* counts several thousand listens per episode, about half from Turkey, even though most episodes are in English.⁷⁰ What makes *Ottoman History Podcast* unique is that it has achieved this listenership without any direct institutional support. Gratien and his team do every aspect of the production themselves and finance it from their own pocketbooks (they have also recently started accepting donations).⁷¹ They explain that "we believe that this structure is the best way of facilitating the participation of the maximum number of contributors across the widest variety of institutions while keeping our content as free and accessible as possible."⁷² While this policy means that team members must invest their own money and more of their time into the project, the complete control and flexibility that they enjoy has allowed them to explore podcasting as digital humanities freely. Most episodes of *Ottoman History Podcast* do follow a standard interview format, yet the team members have also developed more programmatic episodes, including investigative series, historical soundscapes, and student-

⁶⁶ Ibid., 213-14. There are many measures of a podcast's popularity, including number of subscribers, number of Facebook followers, and number of website visits, but I favor number of episode listens (referred to as downloads in the Alegi article) because it best measures the number of people who are actually consuming the primary product of a podcast—the audio recordings themselves.

⁶⁷ "Africa Past and Present," *Podcasts*, accessed December 8, 2018.

⁶⁸ "About Us," Ottoman History Podcast, accessed December 8, 2018, <http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/p/about-us.html>.

⁶⁹ Chris Gratien, "Project Overview," Ottoman History Podcast, December 11, 2016, <http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/p/mission-statement.html>.

⁷⁰ Gratien, "Podcasts and the Public Humanities," 10.

⁷¹ "Ottoman History Podcast is Creating Scholarly Internet Radio," Patreon, 2018, <https://www.patreon.com/ohp>.

⁷² Gratien, "Project Overview."

produced podcasts. All of these types of episodes are not only original, born-digital content, but also experiments that test what new forms of scholarship can be done in a podcast format.

While the great majority of reviewers of *Ottoman History Podcast* complement its interesting, diverse subject matter and scholarly rigor, a few criticize it as overly scholarly and difficult to follow. One reviewer remarked “50% of the episodes are great and 50% remind me of why I dropped all history classes in college,” and two contrasted *Ottoman History Podcast* to the “gold standard” of the more narrative but less analytical *The History of Rome*.⁷³ Such remarks raise the question of to what extent academic podcasters should allow public tastes to guide their work, a question that public historians doing online work have had to face frequently.⁷⁴ The fact that many of the negative reviews of *Stuff You Missed in History Class* turned out to be simply sexist cautions against seeking to please every last reviewer. Rather, what *Ottoman History Podcast* demonstrates is that there are thousands of listeners who want highly scholarly podcasts, and this specific but still numerous audience deserves to have content available to it as much as another other. Doing public history need not mean sacrificing scholarly rigor in order to be accessible to *everyone* in the public.

The fact is that *Africa Past and Present* and *Ottoman History Podcast* have made the work of hundreds of scholars of Middle Eastern and African history readily available in audio form. Can such a feat be accomplished for Iberian history? My own interview podcast, *Historias*, is an attempt to do so, to build an online archive of conversations covering a wide range of scholarship from all periods of the history of Iberia and the Iberian world. I believe the best way to carry out this goal of public history is to practice podcasting as part of the digital humanities, that is, to create original content that is more than a repackaging of work already available from the guests through other sources. The intended audience is academics and interested members of the public.⁷⁵ Therefore, rather than have guests only discuss their research, we examine a broader topic to which their research speaks, and we work to provide the necessary historical context as well, avoiding unexplained jargon and name dropping. Covering all this within the forty-minute cap that I set to keep the episode lengths reasonable is challenging for guests who have studied the topic in question for years, but the hope is that this format will make the discussions accessible for non-specialists. While the project is still in its infancy, like *Ottoman History Podcast*, *Historias* receives no institutional support, and so I hope that the freedom total independence provides will allow for experimentation with programmatic episodes in the future. For now,

⁷³ Rohit51, “Academic, but Still Decent,” *Podcasts*, January 24, 2013 and Scrumdog, “Great Content; Poor Presentation,” *Podcasts*, November 18, 2012.

⁷⁴ Foster, “Online and Plugged In,” 2-5.

⁷⁵ For more information, see <https://historiaspodcast.org/>.

Historias has earned a small but consistent following of more than one hundred listens per episode, a number that still may exceed the number of views a guest's articles receive on academia.edu or a database. While over half (53%) of episode plays come from the United States, and naturally a fair number come from Spain as well (13%), in all plays have come from over fifty countries, extending the reach of Spanish history in English to such far-away places as Kazakhstan, Israel, and the Crown dependency of Jersey, to name a few.⁷⁶ One of the most popular episodes is a special edition on the Catalan independence movement, a fact which corroborates my assertion regarding Malcolm Gladwell's work that podcast listeners are looking for content that is relevant to current events.

There is one other podcast devoted specifically to Iberian history, and this one has an even more specialized focus.⁷⁷ Edward Collins' *Kingdom, Empire and Plus Ultra: Conversations on the history of Portugal and Spain, 1415-1898* is one of a number of podcasts sponsored by History Hub, the University College Dublin School of History's outreach program.⁷⁸ The series is in the interview format, and although it does not follow as clear of a trajectory as a narrative podcast might, Collins carefully chooses the guests so that all of the conversations concern relations between Portugal and Spain and their empires between 1415 and 1898. There are a limited number of scholars who can speak to the podcast's fairly narrow topic, therefore, Collins must rely on FaceTime and Skype interviews to reach guests around the world. Nevertheless, podcast's institutional sponsorship allows Collins to use high-quality recording equipment and to have the audio files professionally edited.⁷⁹ While the conversations are very scholarly, Collins and his guests also make efforts to provide background for the casual listener, such as through Collins' narrative summary of Spanish and Portuguese history in the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, which serves as an introductory episode. Reviewers seem to agree: this is a fascinating podcast with a high level of scholarly rigor, perfect for committed listeners (the conversations usually extend well past an hour).⁸⁰ The fact that each of Collins' episodes receives hundreds of listens indicates that there is a public interest in specialized, academic discussions of Iberian history that extends beyond the few dozen people at most that might attend

⁷⁶ Statistics compiled from Soundcloud Stats on December 8, 2018. It should be noted that when promoting the podcast on Facebook I usually target the United States and Spain.

⁷⁷ While not strictly podcasts, the lecture series *Other 1492: Ferdinand, Isabella, and the Making of an Empire* by Teofilo F. Ruiz and *The History of Spain: Land on a Crossroad* by Joyce E. Salisbury are also available in audio format, for a fee, as part of The Teaching Company's Great Courses program.

⁷⁸ "About Us," History Hub, 2018, <http://historyhub.ie/about>.

⁷⁹ Edward Collins, e-mail message to author, July 16, 2018.

⁸⁰ "Kingdom, Empire and Plus Ultra," *Podcasts*, accessed July 8, 2018.

a conference panel, and Collins notes that over 60% of his traffic is from outside of Ireland.⁸¹

Table 3- A Comparison of Four Specialized Academic History Podcasts

Name	<i>Africa Past and Present</i>	<i>Ottoman History Podcast</i>	<i>Historias</i>	<i>Kingdom, Empire and Plus Ultra</i>
Host(s)	Peter Alegi and Peter Limb	Various	Foster Chamberlin	Edward Collins
Type	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview
Sponsorship	Institutional (Michigan State University)	Independent	Independent	Institutional (University College Dublin)
Release Dates	January 2008 to present	March 2011 to present	July 2017 to present	June 2016 to present
Number of Episodes	120	392	17	18
Frequency of Episode Release	Usually monthly	Every few days	Monthly	Varies
Typical Duration	25-60 minutes	30-60 minutes	30-40 minutes	1-2 hours
Typical Number of Listens Per Episode	7.5 thousand (in 2010)	5-10 thousand	1-3 hundred	4-6 hundred

Sources: Data updated from the websites of these podcasts, their Soundcloud pages, and the Apple Podcast app on December 8, 2018.

The Future of Podcasting in Iberian History

While there are already a couple of podcasts in English dedicated to Iberian history and a scattering of episodes from other podcasts, Iberian history is really only beginning to enter the podcasting world. Ideally, this world would be populated by a number of dedicated podcasts that would consider different aspects of Iberian history in different ways, providing options for more casual and for highly specialized listeners. For example, the *Ottoman History Podcast* serves as a point of reference for listeners interested in the lands formerly controlled by the

⁸¹ Edward Collins, e-mail message to author, July 16, 2018.

Ottoman Empire, and then there are the more specialized podcasts *Maghrib Past & Present Podcasts* and *Southeast Passage*, focusing on the Maghrib and Southeastern Europe respectively, to which listeners desiring more on a particular region can turn. A variety of formats is also important because each one not only offers different options for listeners but also drives scholars to think in new ways compared with how they produce their written work. Narrative podcasts can provide listeners with easy-to-understand historical summary, interview podcasts can introduce listeners to the work of a variety of different scholars, broadcasts can make live events available worldwide, and programmatic podcasts can present new scholarship in an engaging format. In other words, podcasting offers Iberian historians not only a way to reach a larger audience, but also to produce new and innovative scholarship and to increase communication and collaboration between different members of the field. While not intended to be a complete guide to academic podcasting, this section aims to lay out how a prospective podcaster may consider how best to contribute to the advancement of Iberian history in the podcasting world and how best to practice podcasting as digital humanities.

Aspiring academic podcasters should choose the format of their podcasts based on their goals for the podcast and the resources that they can dedicate to the project. Developing a project's goal is the most important step.⁸² How will the podcaster contribute something new and important to podcasting in Iberian history? Aspiring podcasters may want to keep in mind that the much of the material currently available concerns the Spanish Golden Age of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with a fair amount on the Spanish Civil War as well. The emphasis on the early modern period is surprising considering that the trend at the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies (ASPHS) conferences has been towards modern history, which suggests a disconnect between podcasting and academic work in Iberian history.⁸³ There is also very little podcast coverage of Portuguese history or of the ancient and medieval periods in Iberia. Furthermore, most academic podcasts (including both focusing on Iberian history) are in the interview format, yet the above look at popular podcasts demonstrates that audiences are looking for the engaging stories provided by the narrative and programmatic formats.

The intended audience is a critical part of the goal that will also shape the design of the podcast. If the goal is to promote communication and dialogue within the academic community, an interview podcast with longer episodes might work

⁸² James Altucher, "How My Podcast Downloads Doubled Overnight," The Mission Podcasts, March 14, 2017, <https://medium.com/the-mission/how-my-podcast-downloads-doubled-overnight-184d47a00f76>.

⁸³ Carla Rahn Phillips, "Arriving (Way Beyond) Where We Started: Forty-Eight Years of Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* 42, no. 2 (2017): 13, <https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1245>.

best. If the goal is to inform the public about Iberian history, a narrative or programmatic podcast with short, punchy episodes might be better. In this case, audiences will be looking for good storytelling, and care must be taken to avoid specialized vocabulary and obscure references. The aspiring podcaster can also think about how to design a program that treats podcasting as part of the digital humanities, creating born-digital scholarship that is consciously adapted to the online environment. Formulating a unique goal through considering factors like format and audience will do this to an extent (since format and audience will not be the same as traditional written work), but ideally podcasters will go further by producing original work that takes advantage of the audio format through the use of sound clips, music, and/or multiple voices.

Table 4- Considerations for Founding an Academic Podcast⁸⁴

Goal/Purpose	Format	Resources
Scope	Type	Funding
Audience	Duration and Frequency	Costs
Contribution to the Digital Humanities	Level of Audience's Assumed Knowledge	Time Commitment

How far podcasters can go towards achieving these goals is limited by the financial and temporal resources that they can dedicate to the project. Expenses consist of audio equipment, editing programs, and (in some cases) labor; website (optional) and audio hosting; and advertising (also optional). These costs can vary greatly, but they are predictable. On the one hand, one could in theory produce a podcast at no financial cost at all, recording using a free app on a smartphone, editing oneself using free software (most choose Audacity), taking advantage of the limited free website and audio hosting available, and promoting solely through organic social media posts. However, such a podcast would suffer from poor audio quality, only be able to offer a few episodes, and receive little exposure on social media. On the other hand, a podcast recorded on professional audio equipment, professionally edited (Adobe Audition is the standard software), hosted on a dedicated website, and promoted through paid social media posts would offer a

⁸⁴ Chris Gratien offers another way to think of the tasks involved in producing a podcast: concept, planning, recording, editing, publication, and promotion. Gratien, "Podcasts and the Public Humanities," 4.

much more appealing product that many more people would be aware of, but its budget could run in the thousands of dollars per year.⁸⁵ In other words, while anyone could have the financial resources to start a podcast, creating one with professional quality and wide publicity is expensive enough to demand a revenue source. For the academic podcast, this usually means support from an educational institution (advertising is off-putting to listeners and may compromise the podcaster's objectivity). Fortunately, obtaining such support is not out of the question, numerous academic podcasters have already done so, often through institutes that promote public history.

Table 5- The Budgets of Two Independent Academic Podcasts

Expense	<i>Ottoman History Podcast</i>	<i>Historias</i>
Recording	\$533 (Zoom H6 Recorder [\$350], dynamic cardioid microphones, and related equipment)	\$60 (Olympus VN-722PC Recorder)
Editing	\$0 (institutional Adobe Audition subscription)	\$0 (Audacity)
Website Hosting	\$10 (Enom)	\$48 (WordPress.com Personal)
Audio Hosting	\$95 (Soundcloud Unlimited Pro)	\$95 (Soundcloud Unlimited Pro)
Promotion	\$150 (\$2.50-3 per episode on Facebook)	\$120 (\$10 per episode on Facebook)
Total	\$788	\$323

Source: Gratien, "Podcasting and the Public Humanities," 36.

⁸⁵ James Altucher, an entrepreneur and host of several popular talk-show-style podcasts, estimates he spends about \$2,000 per month on a weekly podcast through renting a studio and hiring an audio engineer and producer. "How My Podcast Downloads."

For the academic, time is as valuable as money, and the temporal demands of podcasting are greater than the financial. Edward Collins works on his project over the summer due to the “ridiculous” amount of time required to research a topic, write questions, and record interviews, and he has the advantage of having a professional editor.⁸⁶ Chris Gratien cautions that the editing is the real time sink, taking two to three minutes to edit per minute of recording.⁸⁷ One can see my own time investment per episode in Table 6. It agrees with Collins and Gratien that the research and editing phases require the most time. A failure to balance the time dedicated to podcasting with other commitments can lead to a project’s early demise. Elizabeth Green Musselman had to leave her history of science podcast at fourteen episodes as each one was taking her forty-sixty hours to prepare.⁸⁸

Table 6- Estimated Time Spent Preparing an Episode of *Historias*

Task	Estimated Time Spent
Research	4-8 hours
Preparing Questions	2 hours
Recording	1 hour
Editing	2-4 hours
Publishing (preparing webpage and social media promotions)	1 hour
Total	10-16 hours

Podcasting is a labor of love for academics, who do not receive direct financial compensation for their efforts. However, their substantial investment in time (one-two days per episode in my experience) need not be unrewarded. As mentioned above, more institutions are now considering such digital scholarship as part of an academic’s service to the profession. Nevertheless, committees are still far from giving the publication of podcast episodes as much weight when considering academic promotion as they do to the publication of journal articles, since there is no peer review in podcasting. The time the academic must devote to podcasting is only truly justified if one considers the intangible benefits as well: increased interaction with other scholars, wider publicity of one’s own work, and the knowledge that one is contributing to the body of historical scholarship available to the public online.⁸⁹ Podcasting can also allow the scholar to broaden

⁸⁶ Edward Collins, e-mail message to author, July 16, 2018.

⁸⁷ Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities,” 6.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Green Musselman, “Missing the Missing Link,” *The Missing Link: A Podcast on the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology*, October 1, 2008, <https://missinglinkpodcast.wordpress.com/>.

⁸⁹ Alegi has noticed some of these benefits from publishing the *Africa Past and Present* podcast. “Podcasting the Past,” 219.

his or her historical knowledge through researching episodes and to think about his or her own scholarship in new ways through adapting it to a new format. Respondents to a questionnaire I sent to guests on my own show described the experience as “very pleasant” and “fun” rather than uncomfortable or stressful. Several mentioned that they appreciated the chance to think about how to present their work to a broader audience.⁹⁰

Conclusion

With over 500 thousand shows and eighteen million episodes currently available, the claim that there is vast room for growth in the podcasting world may seem hard to sustain. But the beauty of podcasting is its low barrier for entry. There is no reason why all scholars of Iberian history should not make their research available online in an audio format through a podcast. Every recording need not receive thousands of listens or sacrifice scholarly rigor because the goal can be simply accessibility, to make academic research freely available to the public in a format that is easy to consume, not to mention the possibilities for classroom use, which are not considered in this article.⁹¹ Although the time needed to produce a podcast is substantial, every scholar need not have his or her own podcast. Some can appear as guests on broadcast or interview podcasts while the more ambitious can produce their own narrative or even programmatic shows. Dedicated shows will require significant investments in time from their producers, and, in the case of programmatic ones, institutional resources will also be needed for professional recording and editing. If such an environment of different shows is created, each presenting a different aspect of Iberian history in a different way, then podcasting will stand as one of the simplest and most accessible ways in which Iberian historians can contribute to the digital humanities. If Iberian historians practice podcasting with the tenets of digital humanities in mind, producing original content that adapts the presentation of research to the online audio format, then podcasting could become the primary way in which they reach an audience beyond the narrow world of conference panels and academic journals, and the examples examined in this paper prove that even specialized podcasts enjoy truly global listenerships. ASPHS was founded in 1970 to make Iberian history more visible outside of the peninsula. Through its conferences and this journal, the association has

⁹⁰ Podcasting Interviewee Questionnaire, Google Forms, responses collected August 10, 2018.

⁹¹ Gratien, “Podcasts and the Public Humanities,” 10. This article relies on number of listens to track a podcast’s success since it is one of the few metrics available, but the most important goal is to make scholarship accessible while maintaining its rigor, even if listenership remains small. As Séan Richardson writes, “measuring the impact of the podcast plainly through its listenership feels cynical (and draws us towards the politics of the citation). Instead, podcasts should be seen as digital learning tools that can stimulate critical thinking.” “Aural Pleasure: Podcasting, Pedagogy and the Public Humanities,” *The Discipline* (forum) 2, Cycle 3 (30 August 2017), <https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/posts/aural-pleasure>.

succeeded—the first ASPHS conference in 1970 featured just seventeen papers, in 2017 the number was 102.⁹² Yet further outreach will require adaptation to new mediums, and in the twenty-first century, these will be digital. And so, when I asked Edward Collins if he had anything he would like to share with aspiring podcasters, he gave perhaps the best advice of all: “just do it. . . the more [Spanish and Portuguese history podcasts] there are, the more chance we have of hearing everyone’s voice.”⁹³

⁹² Phillips, “Arriving (Way Beyond),” 4-5.

⁹³ Edward Collins, e-mail message to author, July 16, 2018.