

# Web Radio by Children? An Explorative Study on an International Children's Radio Network

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## Abstract

*This research investigates the fundamental participation strategies of an online children radio network (Radijojo) concerning organization and production. It focuses on in what extend the interactive services of the platform nurture participation. The research adopts two analysis frameworks to examine the reciprocity between interactive tools of the site and main participation strategies. Qualitative data is collected in two major phases: Content analysis and semi-structured interviews. Results revealed that despite the lack of detailed interactive and participative tools, the model based on collective content developing process within a significant editorial setting provided a potential for the inclusion of children in the communication process.*

**keywords:** *internet radio, children's media, participation, interactivity*

## **Radio web par des enfants?**

### **Une étude exploratoire sur le réseau radiophonique International pour enfants**

#### **Resumé**

*Cette recherche examine les stratégies fondamentales de la participation d'un réseau de radio d'enfants en ligne (Radijojo) concernant l'organisation et la production. Il se concentre sur quelle mesure les services interactifs de la participation nourrit la plate-forme. La recherche adopte deux cadres d'analyses pour examiner la réciprocité entre les outils interactifs du site et des stratégies de participation principale. Des données qualitatives sont recueillies en deux grandes phases : analyse du contenu et des entrevues semi-structurées. Les résultats ont révélé que, malgré l'absence de détaillé interactifs et participatifs des outils, le modèle basé sur contenu collective, l'élaboration de processus dans un cadre éditorial important fourni un potentiel pour l'intégration des enfants dans le processus de communication.*

**mots-clés :** *la radio d'Internet, média d'enfant, la participation, l'interactivité*

## **Çocukların Web Radyosu?**

### **Uluslararası Bir Çocuk Radyo Ağı'nın Anatomisi**

#### **Özet**

*Bu çalışma internet üzerinde faaliyet gösteren bir çocuk radyo ağı'nın (radijojo) uyguladığı temel katılım stratejilerini organizasyonel açıdan ve üretim perspektfinden hareketle incelemektedir. Çalışmanın ana yönelimi, radyonun kullandığı etkileşim hizmetlerinin katılım olgusunu ne ölçüde besleyebildiği sorusuna yanıt aramaktır. Araştırma etkileşim araçlarıyla katılım stratejileri arasındaki ilişkiselliği inceleyebilmek için iki analiz çerçevesi önermektedir. Niteliksel veri iki düzlemde ele alınmaktadır: İçerik analizi ve derinlemesine görüşme. Çalışmanın sonuçları göstermektedir ki; etkileşim ve katılım araçlarının konumlandırılmasında ve uygulamasında belli başlı noksanlıklar olmakla birlikte, belli bir editoryal çerçeve içerisinde kolektif bir içerik geliştirme yöntemiyle işleyen yapı, çocukları iletişim sürecine dahil etme noktasında önemli bir potansiyele sahiptir.*

**anahtar kelimeler :** *internet radyo, çocuk yayıncılığı, katılım, etkileşim*

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## **The Evolution of Children's Broadcasting: Restrictions, Problems, Potentials**

As a matter of fact, today's mass media usually tends to deny integrating children into their programming either because they are not deemed to be part of the society, or because broadcasters do not recognize that children could have anything of value to say, or because it is predicted that adults would not want to listen to children. Therefore children are mostly deprived of any opportunity to tell their own stories and to express themselves through the use of media. Since public service broadcasters traditionally give place more or less to children's programming according to the principles of *universality of appeal* and *provision for minorities* (Tracey 1998: 26-27) and the commercial media industry based on 'free flow of information doctrine' could not answer the need for a democratic media sphere, many efforts emerged in years to be able to get the excluded sectors of the society involve in communication cycle such as children. Among several attempts concerning children's right of expression, UNESCO's efforts can be considered as prominent. Arising out of the 'dependency critique' that is taken up by the third world nations against the traditional broadcasting paradigms, UNESCO uphold the 'New World Information and Communication Order' in the early 1980's despite the risk of facing opposition of corporate media lobbies (Preston, Herman & Schiller 1989). In spite of turning back to the 'free flow doctrine' by the late 1980s, UNESCO continued its efforts to involve young people in the media as active participants till today and supported youth and child media projects especially in the developing countries (Asthana 2006; Cecilia & Carlsson 2002, Guttman 2003). Following the UNESCO's efforts, a large number of social movements, NGO's and initiatives burst into sight who worked on issues of social justice and communication by the mid 1990s (Siochru 2005). Around the '*media by, for and of the people*' slogan proposed by Kidd (1998), the actors of the 'democratization of communication' movement tried to improve '*our media*' projects including children's by challenging the neoliberal/neoconservative paradigm represented by governmental and commercial mainstream media (Hadl 2007: 4). The reflection of this movement on children's media was recognition of this voiceless minority as an audience group who finally has been 'given a voice' to speak on their own behalf (Davies et al., 1998 Buckingham et al., 1994). Among these initiatives, those of AMARC's (currently the biggest organization of grassroots radio practitioners) and World Radio Forum's can be seen as distinguishable concerning the child radio programming and the issues deriving from children's media use. For example the declaration of 'Radio Manifesto' in 2004 by WRF represents the ongoing endeavors for a new children's media policy in terms of interpretations of children's media rights (The Radio Manifesto, 2004, retrieved in May 2010, [www.worldradioforum.org](http://www.worldradioforum.org)). Other than these institutional attempts there are several projects of children's media all over the world which aims to give voice to children although they have to face many difficulties deriving from the controversial nature of children's

programming in terms of defining the relationship between children and adults (Jenks 1996; Bardy, Sgirtta and Wintersberger 1994).

Despite the fact that a couple of strategies have been exercised by different media sectors to fulfill the need for a satisfactory programming for children in years, participative, amateur, non-hierarchical and accessible projects aiming to nurture reciprocal communication between children still have many limitations caused either by the continuing domination of traditional broadcasting paradigms on media sector or by the restrictions deriving from the nature of media itself. Historical positioning of traditional large-scale media and its evolution is one of the main constraints that confine children's programming to a narrow space. Because traditional large-scale media tend to categorize their audience as 'taxonomic collectives' (Ang 1991), they usually have seen children's programming a function of their global objectives. During the dualist orientation of the media as public and commercial broadcasting, children were not much than passive 'citizens' or 'clients'. But with the augmentation and diversification of media marketplace after 80's they acquired a more detailed identification as an audience group. In this period new corporate media and public broadcasters begin to launch specific channels and stations addressing children according to the audience segmentation strategy of the new media market in which the children's media can be considered as one of the fastest growing and most profitable sectors (Lustyik 2010). However, this quantitative situation doesn't imply a dramatic change in professionalism or hierarchy in children's programming, and also in presentation of children as stereotypes. 'What is good for children' elitism of public broadcasters and 'what is profitable' pragmatism of corporate media seem to be consistent despite the changing nature of children's identification in media. On the other hand, especially the "*development communication*" wing of community radio movement has similar handicaps as such in traditional public broadcast services settled in developing countries. The oldest, the *diffusionist* or *modernization* approach of DevCom paradigm that considers radio as an important instrument for modernizing 'backward' societies (Beltran 1998) evolved into a more *participatory* paradigm led by UNESCO and FAO in 1980s (Servaes 2003: 15), and then into the 'social change' phenomenon by the end of the cold war (Servaes & Malikhao 2005: 95). However, not only the oldest *diffusionist* paradigm, which sees communication as a top-down process but also the newer paradigms still seem to fail to 'account for differences of class, ethnicity, patterns of organization, age or gender' among members of the community, often leading to 'unequal distribution of benefits, violation of traditional practices, and creation of conflict' (Riano 1994: 10). Eventually, among different initiatives conducted by community radios, public broadcasting services, child and youth media organizations and national and international children's rights NGO's and their facilitators, none of the children radio projects are totally carried out 'by' children. The outcome of these projects usually takes place in the schedules of public or community based radios but not occupy a big place as well as that they have deserved. Among

these initiatives a new medium is becoming increasingly popular in the meaning of elimination of participation problems deriving from the nature of conventional mediums that have certain limitations of interaction. The Internet and the World Wide Web seem to provide an important opportunity to be able to overcome the children's active participation to the communication process. Nevertheless, as a new medium Internet brings about new tensions between traditional media industries aiming to colonize web and autonomous actors who want to make use of potentials of Internet to create a public sphere for voiceless sectors of the traditional communication cycle. Eventually, Internet radio is located within this tension.

### **The Emergence of Radio on the Internet: An Existential Problem**

A medium is not a basic transmitter or a communication tool delivering only signals or symbols, that is to say every medium has its own specificities that differentiate itself from others. The question is that how can we differ a medium from another or, as in our case how we can make the decision that a new medium has arrived and can identify its characteristics that make it different from the old one. According to Black (2001: 399), the specification or identification of a medium comes about through the interplay of several factors and forces including manufacture, promotion, content, patterns of usage, and language. In the case of Internet or Web Radio, these factors represent a tension between the endeavors of corporate culture trying to turn the Internet into an advertising medium and the search for a democratic medium in which the voiceless sectors of the media environment can take place. This second side of this tension is strongly related with the identification of Web Radio as a new, cutting-edge, progressive and participative medium.

Today, the existence of radio in Internet is usually described around two main categories: the first is terrestrial radio stations streaming online using a land-based transmitter and webcasting via the Internet at the same time, and the second is Internet-based radio stations (Web stations) using streaming technologies to webcast programs that users can listen to only through Internet (Ren & Chan-Olmsted 2004: 5). Apart from these there are a couple of audio services that are popular among today's Internet users, which present radio content such as juke box, podcasting, music file sharing and social networking sites. But in the Internet radio literature there seems to be a relative consensus on separating web radio from these services. In this, the term 'broadcasting' is likely to be a key factor, which determines any audio service as 'radio'. For example, podcasting, although it contains recorded speech from hosts, news journalists and experts of many kinds, is seen as a distinctive category which is different from Web Radio because it communicates in the form of pre-recorded program packets (Berry 2006). Music file-sharing is another way of using Internet to fulfill personal needs by means of music listening with music software, and like podcasting it cannot communicate in real time (Jones 2002).

Rather, Web Radio is defined as any entity that is delivering radio content as an audio stream via Internet. These audio streams may be delivered live or archived to be accessed, but in both cases these should be created as programming for broadcast (Smith 2002). This means that, despite new options and possibilities existing in the nature of Internet, Web Radio is generally intended to be seen as a version of old medium and this makes it Internet's equivalent to analog radio (Nyre & Ala-Fossi 2008: 50).

Especially in the first years of its evolution most of the researches on Internet focused on the broadcast media's Internet strategies depending upon the increasing interest of the media industry on this new medium. Like other converging media, studies on Internet radio usually tend to expose what this convergence means for the existing radio industry and how it can change the consumer needs and preferences rather than revealing its potentials for a participatory use of medium. Especially in the succeeding years of the emergence of first Internet radios, researchers were mostly interested in motivations behind consumer's use of Internet radio (Lind & Medoff 1999; Murphy 1999; Potter 2002), and how the audiences use radio station web sites (McClung 2001). The issue of interactivity also came into prominence in many researches, but the focus was usually on the role of interactivity as a technical strategy that has a powerful potential to attract consumers (Coyle & Thorson 2001; Tremayne & Dunwoody 2001). However, there seem to be a constant difference between streaming online stations and web online stations concerning interactivity approaches they had undertaken. The online presence of terrestrial stations means an additional avenue for branding, direct communication to consumers, and potential advertising/retailing opportunities (Lin & Jeffers 2001). They usually see their online presence as a presentation of their products in a different marketplace, while the Internet-based stations are more motivated to provide innovative, interactive web contents to encourage audience loyalty (Ren, Sylvia & Olmsted 2004: 22). Nevertheless, even though different strategies of interactivity have been progressed for different types of Internet radios, the traditional phenomenon of attracting the audience still seems to be a key factor in both cases. Although the potentials of Internet as a customizable and personable medium are increasingly emphasized in recent web radio projects, it is still left in the dark that there is an improvement in the opportunities for audience participation. This situation shows that in order to overcome the handicaps of traditional broadcasting concerning the audience participation, web radio needs to use versatile reception features and interactive services in a different manner than those who prefer to define this new medium an attractive opportunity for the radio industry. Besides, web radio initiatives need to draw away from the old broadcasting paradigm in order to be able to present an alternative platform for the excluded segments of the media environment such as children.

## Methodology

This research, investigates in general the main participation strategies of Radijojo, which is an online children radio network, in terms of organization and production. It also specifically focuses on in what extend the interactive services launched by the websites under this platform nurture participation. The research question of the study can be defined as follows:

RQ: Is there a meaningful interrelation between interactivity and participation in case of a non-commercial child radio claiming to be a meeting point for children from all over the world with the purpose of giving them a free place for expressing themselves?

In this sense the research benefits from two analysis frameworks in order to examine the reciprocity between interactive tools provided by the site and the main participation strategies which dominate the organization and production: The first is the investigation of existing interactive tools in terms of both "audience-oriented interactivity" and "source-oriented interactivity" (Ha and James 1998) and the second is the evaluation of participation strategies in terms of "direct publishing by the citizen", "participation in an editorial setting", and "private user experience" (Nyre & Fossi 2008).

Audience-oriented interaction can be defined around the terms 'playfulness' and 'connectedness' and includes the elements that attract the curiosity of the user such as games, choice of color, speed, language and information answering personal interests. On the other side, in source-oriented interactivity, the focus is usually on 'information collection' and 'reciprocal communication'. Monitoring mechanisms such as registration at websites and response mechanisms such as e-mails, purchasing, surveys and chat rooms identify the main tools of this kind of interaction.

Regarding participation, 'direct publishing' is associated with the production of audio materials by the users themselves without an editorial process. In this kind of participation, every user or group has a free place in which they can present or publish their own speech or programs immunized for control. 'Participation in an editorial setting' rather represents a control mechanism, which canalizes the audience participation in terms of the radio's objectives and production policies, and private user experience refers to individual control mechanisms, which allow the user to customize the site according to the personal needs and expectations.

Our analysis is based on mapping these two frameworks and aims to investigate which interactive tools nurture which category of participation style and in what extend it effects or determines the implementation of this strategy in the case of Radijojo. Radijojo is chosen as the case for this research since –for now– it is still one of the most important global platforms which host an online

child radio network accessing to 110 different countries. Besides Radijojo, the websites that are located under Radijojo and specifically focus on international radio programme exchange between children are also included in the study.

This qualitative research is derived from data collected in two major phases. The first phase includes the content analysis of the web sites under Radijojo platform in terms of existing interactive services. This phase also includes the categorization of participative applications that have taken place as long as the radio is on air. The second phase of the data collection procedure is based on a fieldwork including semi-structured interviews with the founder, managers and the employees of Radijojo in Berlin. This fieldwork provides supplementary findings about the general participation policy of the radio and its implementation.

## **Results and Discussion**

Radijojo, which constitutes the case for our research, is an international non-for-profit NGO (non-governmental organization) producing educative and entertaining radio and online content for kids and with kids on all five continents (Figure 1). By providing content that is free of advertising, Radijojo defines itself as “the first international children’s radio, a network that’s constantly growing around the globe”. Principles of Radijojo, which are also referred in other websites located under Radijojo platform, are defined extensively in their website (Radijojo website 2010, [www.radijojo.de/](http://www.radijojo.de/)):

“RADIJOJO! offers children from 3 to 13 and all parents an exciting, jolly and educationally sensible program that is free of violence or offensive content. RADIJOJO! is independent, advertising-free, non-commercial. RADIJOJO! is bound to no religion, denomination or political party and it is committed solely to the welfare of children. RADIJOJO! broadcasts everything children are and should be interested in: Music, captivating radio plays, colourful magazines, interactive shows, information easy to understand and explanatory conversations ... The variety of topics is without limits: Only to mention a few of the areas: history, politics, economy, science, health, sport; musical education, foreign languages, as well as skills in the mother tongue. RADIJOJO! is a platform for all organisations, persons and social groups, who serve the welfare of children. Whether prevention of violence and addiction or education for example in health education, media competence or in social and communicative abilities: our nuclear task is the appropriate approach of target groups for these essential contents. RADIJOJO! is a vehicle for musicians, authors and journalists, who would like reach the children of the world with educational and sensible contents. RADIJOJO! is a unique forum for children. RADIJOJO! motivates children to discover their talents and to present work of their own. RADIJOJO! is supported and consulted by experts in educational theory, media psychology, radiomanagement, technology, non-profit management and fundraising. RADIJOJO! values the independent controlling of the work and performance. An advisory board made up of socially approved representatives watches over the guidelines of RADIJOJO!’s program and the protection of

children and young people. RADIJOJO! is financed by donations, endowments, public subsidies, memberships, sponsoring, licences and merchandising of RADIJOJO! products.”



Figure 1: Homepage of Radijojo (Radijojo website, 2010, [www.radijojo.de/](http://www.radijojo.de/))

Radijojo provides access to eight different websites which contribute to the exchange of radio programmes made by children for children: “World Children’s Radio”, “Euchira”, “Across the Ocean”, “Global Radio Kids”, “Spielofezien”, “FEZitty”, “Radio Panke” and “We discover the World”.

“World Children’s Radio”, “Euchira”, “Across the Ocean”, “Global Radio Kids” and “We discover the World” are websites that are specifically designed and moderated by Radijojo initiative to enable intercultural exchange of children radio programmes from different parts of the world. Radijojo works with local initiatives from 110 different countries in order to provide content for these websites. The rest of the websites are products of local projects realized in Berlin. “Radio Panke” is a website dedicated to a local project realized between September 2008 and December 2009 in Pank Street in Berlin Wedding district. In collaboration with local schools in the district and local NGOs, 15 radio courses are given to the children. The radio programmes made by children are broadcasted on the site. “Spielofezien” and “FEZitty” are projects in which

Radijojo took part as a contributor. "FEZitty" is named as 'the capital city of children' in which various workshops are organized for children in order to provide them the opportunity to experience different jobs. Radiojojo directed the radio workshop in this facility for six weeks in the summer of 2008 and 2010. "Spielofezien" is also a special event for children in which Radijojo also organized a radio workshop in summer 2009. Both websites provided access to the radio programmes produced as results of these workshops.

By excluding the websites of local projects, our study included analysis on Radijojo and "World Children's Radio", "Euchira", "Across the Ocean", "Global Radio Kids" websites which represented the global efforts to create an online international children radio network. "We discover the World" website was also excluded in the study as it was not online at the period of data collection.

"Euchira" is "European Children's Radio" and part of "World Children's Radio" Network which enables programme exchange between the countries in five different continents. "Global Radio Kids", which is realized with the cooperation with Hanisauland<sup>1</sup>, adopts the same mission but presents a limited content. "Across the Ocean" is also a website which is realized through the Transatlantic programme of the Federal Republic of Germany with funds from the European Recovery Programme (ERP) of the Federal Office for Economy and Technology (BMW). It is a new radio station created especially for the kids in Europe, Canada, and the US (Across the Ocean website, 2010, [www.across-the-ocean.org/](http://www.across-the-ocean.org/)): "This is a special network for kids made by kids where kids on both continents can have the chance to get to know each other better and have their very own station so that they can express their own views, concerns and themes. That is why it is called 'across the ocean', because it serves as a bridge for young audiences on both sides of the Atlantic."

The discussion in the following section will be mainly held by referring to the two frameworks provided in the previous section. The findings are derived from content analysis on features that support interaction and participation in the chosen five websites. Semi-structured interviews provided complementary findings for a thorough discussion.

### ***Audience-oriented Interaction vs. Source-oriented Interaction***

The analysis of the interactive tools in Radijojo platform's websites due to the framework explained in the previous section, are shown in Table 1 below.

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1 Hanisauland is a children's Internet site with a political theme. It is made by the Federal Centre for Political Education in Bonn, Germany. The name "Hipharpigland" refers to the land of hippos, hares and pigs. These animals, together with others in our comic, have lots of funny and exciting adventures. The Hipharpiglanders, you see, are all trying to run a democracy together. <http://www.hanisauland.de/>.

		AUDIENCE-ORIENTED INTERACTIVITY								
		Playfulness	Connectedness							
SOURCE-ORIENTED INTERACTIVITY	Information Collection	Curiosity arousal devices	<i>Illustrative Interface</i>	√	√	√	√	√		
			<i>Music (jingle)</i>	√				√		
		Games	<i>Animative Banners/ Icons</i>	√		√	√	√		
		Choice of color	<i>Customizable Layout</i>					√		
	Reciprocal Communication	Speed		<i>Podcast for different bandwidths</i>	√	√	√			
				<i>Live stream through embedded audio player for different bandwidths</i>	√	√	√	√		
		Language		<i>Content available in at least two languages</i>	√	√	√	√	√	
				<i>Categories</i>		√	√	√		
		Information about content of interest		<i>"On air"</i>	√					
				<i>"Best of"</i>	√					
				<i>News</i>	√	√	√	√		
				<i>"About us" / Impresum</i>	√	√	√	√	√	
				<i>Projects</i>	√					
				<i>Partners</i>	√	√	√	√	√	
				<i>Search engine</i>	√	√	√	√	√	
		Reciprocal Communication	E-mails		<i>Log in panels</i>					
					<i>E-mail information</i>	√	√	√	√	√
			Purchasing		<i>E-commerce</i>					
					<i>Donation</i>	√	√	√		
Surveys			<i>Polls</i>							
Synchronous communication			<i>Chat</i>							
			<i>Discussion forum</i>							
			<i>Contact</i>	√	√	√	√	√		
	Asynchronous communication			<i>Feedback</i>		√	√	√		
			<i>Newsletter</i>		√	√	√			
		<i>Social Media</i>		√	√	√				
	<i>"Get involved"</i>				√					

Table 1: The analysis of the interactive tools in Radijojo platform's websites

When the existing interactive tools in the websites were analyzed in terms of both "audience-oriented interactivity" and "source-oriented interactivity", it was found out that Radijojo platform mostly supported "audience-oriented interaction".

Being aware that the target audience is children, "playfulness" is highly prioritized and provided by the use of diverse interface features. Curiosity arousal devices like flash-based illustrative graphical user interfaces and creative jingles are used in all of the websites. Though games are not directly provided in any of the websites, gaming experience is enabled to a certain extent through animated

banners and icons. As a contribution to the gaming experience, “Global Radio Kids” website also provides limited customization, as the location of the menus can be directly manipulated by the users.

“Connectedness” is also valued by the Radijojo platform since all of the websites support access to content by various features. Considering a global audience from different cultures of the world, content is provided in at least two different languages. The moderators of the platform are aware of differentiating bandwidths in various regions of the world and prioritize providing rapid access to content for all users. Considering the low-bandwidth in especially developing countries, live stream and podcast options are provided for both high and low bandwidths of Internet connection. Although Radijojo tries to adopt a sensitive approach in providing accessibility to children, more efforts concerning universal usability should be spent to support user experience. Providing the opportunity of ‘customization’ and ‘font size manipulation’ may enrich the user experience.

The content analysis reveals the efforts of the moderators for presenting information that answers diverse needs of the audience. Radio content is presented through various categories and search engines. The platform also shows significant efforts to create awareness on the Radijojo network’s mission and vision through links like ‘about us’, ‘partners’, ‘projects’, etc. Though it seems important to emphasize the great need for a children radio network, on the other hand, this preference towards provoking awareness seems to dominate the content and navigation menu as well. At the perception level, this may result in confusion caused by a paradox between the information architecture and layout design which address different target audiences distinctively: A playful layout addressing the kids, but rather an informative content addressing the parents.

The emphasis on informative content can also be traced by the lack of interactive tools that enable reciprocal communication. Though Radijojo defines itself as an online platform, they mostly provide one-way interaction since “source-oriented interaction” is only limited with conventional asynchronous response mechanisms like ‘contact form’, ‘newsletter’, etc. Only in “Across the Ocean” website, the call for interaction and participation is evident by the ‘get involved’ link. In other websites, the user has to search in order to contact with the moderators of the website. Feedback is limited with letters and pictures sent from the users. Social media use is limited with “Twitter” and only available in three of the websites.

Adoption of limited “source-oriented interactivity” also brings the limitation of proactive participation, which is discussed in the following section. Briefly, although Radijojo heads for becoming a global children radio platform, it does not seem to benefit the full potential of www for interaction and participation. However, interviews realized with the founder and moderators of Radijojo revealed that online participation is not limited intentionally. Establishment and

moderation of online synchronous communication and monitoring mechanisms in the websites required the employment of experts in Radijojo. Besides, online platforms can easily bring the risk of the exploitation of the children. These factors seem to push the platform towards the adoption of a unique structure, which idealizes the participation of the users in the production procedure conducted by the editors themselves and other moderators such as teachers.

### ***Participation in an Editorial Setting***

When the participation strategy of Radijojo platform's websites were analyzed with regards to the interactive tools, which are mostly audience-oriented, it was found out that the platform mostly adopted the strategy of "participation in an editorial setting". As an exception, as a part of 'private media consumption', access to background information about the website and the producer of the programs were presented in all of the websites. The analysis of participation in Radijojo platform's websites is shown in Table 2.

All the websites presented the tools and links to get in touch with the moderators of the websites. Although uploading content directly by the user is not enabled by any of the websites, the moderators and supervisors play important roles in carrying the produced content to web. This production procedure is structured with definite steps designed by the Radijojo initiative. In this procedure the children are the major producers, but the actors in the participation procedure are mostly teachers and educators since they act as the bridge between the content and the web: *"The participation is mostly dedicated to educators, teachers"*.

This reveals the participation strategy of Radijojo initiative, which the founder and chief editor of Radiojojo, Thomas Rohlinger defines as a certain editorial frame: *"Participation in my context does not mean anybody does anything they want at any time. That way you get nowhere. We sat a frame here and try to make it exciting for the kids. And the rest was up to them..."*.

In this defined editorial setting, the production is carried out by national and international workshops realized with elementary schools through the moderation of the Radijojo crew. In all the workshops, the moderators work with the teachers. Depending on the demand of the schools or the projects engaged within, two major strategies are employed in realizing the workshops.

As the first strategy, two schools are chosen and the teachers are contacted. If the workshop is funded by a project, the moderators visit both schools and carry out workshops on radio production with kids. If not, the teachers are informed and they conduct the workshops by themselves. These workshops provide skills of radio programming to kids. The moderators and the teachers choose a theme such as 'hunger', 'education', etc. After having prepared for

discussion on the chosen subject, the children in both schools discuss with each other on the theme through *Skype* under the supervision of their teachers and the whole conversation is recorded. This innovative phase, which is based on the exchange of ideas between children living geographically apart, appears to be the most interactive and participative part of the collective production. Radijojo initiative also values this phase: *"What we do is Skype sessions with kids where they interact directly"*. The recording is edited editorially by the Radijojo staff and broadcasted on web. Radijojo platform is quite experienced with this model, since they realized many projects between schools in Germany and schools in Britain, France and Turkey as well.

The second strategy includes the realization of workshops not between pairs of schools but rather with each school separately. The same procedure is conducted under the supervision of the teachers. However, after the workshop, the students go to the field to make interviews about the chosen theme. The recorded material is transferred to Radijojo platform by the teachers and is again edited and broadcasted by the Radijojo staff. In this model, the teachers play a more important role, since after the workshop, they are the only supervisors of the whole production procedure from the beginning to the end.

Both strategies point out to a participation approach shaped within a significant editorial setting defined by the Radijojo initiative. This approach prioritizes the participation of the kids in the collective radio production phase rather than the direct participation through web.

			Radijojo	Euchira	World Children's Radio	Across the Ocean	Global Radio Kids
Participation	Direct Publishing	Producing and publishing own speech and audiovisual material					
	Participation in an editorial setting	Speaking with the editors	√	√	√	√	√
		Speaking or sending on air, or on a recording made by producer	√	√	√	√	√
		Writing messages	√	√	√	√	√
	Private Media Consumption	Creating personalized playlists					
		Accessing background information	√	√	√	√	√
		Time-shifting the programs					
		Changing stations (tune in or out)					
		Switching the equipment					

Table 2: The analysis of participation in Radijojo platform's websites

Although the analysis indicate that there is only limited participation in terms of 'participation in an editorial setting', the interviews with the board of Radijojo revealed that participation issues in these web sites were not excluded strictly on purpose. Röhlinger emphasized the lack of human resources and finance for developing participation:

"At the beginning we had a forum but there were strange people there in the middle of the night and we closed it. Being global like that requires being open all the time... It means five educated people who can speak at least two or three languages."

He also indicated that participation via interactive tools is something they want to implement in the sites but with caution because there could be some legal and ethical difficulties.

"The files will be processed editorially. This is the difference from YouTube. People say it should be open but I say no. Because it is a children thing and it will be open then also to child abusers. So we can't do that."

Even though they are close to the idea of building a controlled web environment in which the users can upload and download files easily, the platform does not feel ready to realize this phase.

Another reason for that preference appears to be the competition with the other interactive entertainment media.

"Children sitting at home are looking for entertainment. So you should be more entertaining and you cannot be looking cheap. Of course we would like to do that but if I had ten editors."

As a result it can be stated that –for now– Radijojo network does not present the direct participation tools for the audience to interact directly, but enables participation in the production phase. However, the statements of the editors show that they wish to present direct participation tools in the coming future if they can overcome the financial issues.

## **Conclusion**

As we have pointed out before, among different initiatives conducted by community radios, public broadcasting services, child and youth media organizations and national and international children's rights NGO's and their facilitators, none of the children radio projects are totally carried out 'by' children in today's media environment. However, the Internet and the World Wide Web seem to provide an important opportunity to be able to overcome the children's active participation to the communication process. Among a couple of others,

one of these Internet based endeavors seems to be prominent in terms of presenting opportunities for children to participate to the communication cycle. Radijojo, as an international radio network addressing children deserves to be a research case concerning interactivity and participation strategies which are the most important issues of an ongoing discussion around the emancipatory use of Internet.

When the existing interactive tools in the websites of Radijojo platform were analyzed, it was found out that Radijojo platform mostly supported "audience-oriented interaction". While the target audience is children, "playfulness" is highly prioritized and provided by the use of diverse interface features.

Considering a global audience from different cultures of the world, content is provided in at least two different languages. The moderators of the platform are aware of differentiating bandwidths in various regions of the world and prioritize providing rapid access to content for all users.

However, insistent emphasis on providing information about the background of the platform causes confusion at the perception of the website. The information architecture and layout design address different target audiences distinctively: A playful layout addressing the kids, but rather an informative content addressing the parents.

Though Radijojo defines itself as an online platform, it does not seem to benefit the full potential of www for interaction and participation. However, interviews realized with the founder and moderators of Radijojo revealed that online participation is not limited intentionally. At this point both legal and financial issues seem to push the platform towards the adoption of a unique structure, which idealizes the participation of the users in the production procedure.

In this defined editorial setting, the production is carried out by national and international workshops realized with elementary schools through the moderation of the Radijojo crew. In all the workshops, the moderators work with the teachers who supervise the students in the production procedure. This strategy points out to a participation approach shaped within a significant editorial setting defined by the Radijojo initiative. This approach prioritizes the participation of the kids in the collective radio production phase rather than the direct participation through web.

Despite the lack of interactive and participative tools the content developing process and content itself makes the Radijojo platform a unique environment for children. Considering the previous projects and progress of the network, this platform seems to be close to adopting a more interactive structure with definite participation opportunities.

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