



## **Interview with Javier Celaya, dosdoce.com**

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**KENNEALLY:** The Ministry of Culture in Spain has announced an \$8.5 million grant program to support development of publishing's burgeoning audio sector. That government investment is expected to heat up further an already red-hot market category that includes audiobooks and podcasts.

Welcome to CCC's podcast series. I'm Christopher Kenneally for Velocity of Content. According to the latest report from dosdoce.com on audio publishing in Spanish-language markets, production and consumption is soaring. In 2023, the audio industry in Spanish-language markets – Spain, South America, and the US Hispanic market – nearly doubled in size. Once-scarce audio content in Spanish has also snowballed. And like other areas of publishing, artificial intelligence is set to transform the field.

Javier Celaya, founder of dosdoce.com, joins me now from Madrid. *Bienvenidos.*

**CELAYA:** *Muchas gracias.*

**KENNEALLY:** We first spoke about Spanish-language audio almost five years ago, Javier, when the market was still thin on the ground. The audio industry map you've created for 2024 shows a now-crowded space. Take us on a quick tour. What do you see on your audio industry map that wasn't there in 2019?

**CELAYA:** Well, basically in the last five to seven years, the market has doubled. Basically, as you said, five, seven years ago, there was nothing here, because publishers as well as production companies and streaming services did not believe there was an audio market in Spain, Latin America, and the Hispanic market in the US. But the last five years, there's been a complete turnaround, and now the size of the market has doubled.

In the last map we have released, basically we have close to 750 audio entities that provide either services or production content for the audio industry in Spain. 40% of them are production companies and publishing companies that create audiobooks and podcasts. Another 25% are media conglomerates that are using audio to basically reach new audiences – Generation Z and millennials. And about 15% are streaming companies like Audible, Storytel, Podimo, and Spotify providing their services in the market.



KENNEALLY: Spain remains the main place of origin for these programs and services in the Spanish-language audio industry, yet South America and the US Hispanic market do have growing roles. Even in Portuguese-speaking Brazil, Spanish-language audio shows strength. The global reach of this content must make for an exciting marketplace, Javier.

CELAYA: Yeah, bear in mind, Chris, that Spanish is a global language. After English and Chinese, it's the most-spoken language worldwide. So there's no surprise that publishing companies as well as the streaming services are looking into Spanish as a way to grow their services and their reach. As you said, yes, five, seven years ago, there was less than 25,000 audiobooks in the market. Now, most likely in the next few years, we'll double the size of this catalog in Spain and Latin America. And we're seeing a lot of interest in different players not only from Spain and Latin America, but also from the US. This week, we had Michele Cobb here in Spain, and she indicated that half of the US publishers in the United States last year produced audiobooks in Spanish, producing more than 600 titles in the US only. So there is a lot of competition for the Spanish market across the different parts of the world.

KENNEALLY: And the growth of that catalog, Javier, has been in part due to the burgeoning of podcasting. Today, we have not only, as you say, 25,000 audiobook titles in the Spanish-language catalog, but 100,000 podcasts. What's the role of podcasting in this?

CELAYA: Well, podcasting, in my view, is a bridge for reaching more audio listeners. We're very happy with all this growth in the Spanish market, but it's still a very small market. It represents less than 1% of the total revenues to the publishers. So in order to enlarge the market – there are more listeners of podcasting than listeners of audiobooks. 40% of the Spanish population listens to podcasts, whereas only 7% of the population listens to audiobooks. A lot of publishers have seen in the podcast format a way to reach new listeners and to basically open the gates for them to discover a longer audio experience. Because at the end, the difference between a podcast and an audiobook are becoming almost invisible, because we see more and more fiction podcasts that are very similar to an audiobook. The only difference to me is the length of the audio experience. In podcasts, you have like 20 to 30 minutes. In an audiobook, you have an average of a six-hour to eight-hour listening experience. So podcasts will enlarge the audiobook industry in the next few years in the Spanish market.

KENNEALLY: Javier Celaya, how do you expect that artificial intelligence solutions will impact the Spanish-language audio sector?

CELAYA: There are a lot of books out there that they will never see the market with a human voice, because the category of the title or the visibility of the author will never make it financially sustainable. Whereas having that title being produced with artificial



intelligence will make it much cheaper, and that way, it could see the light in an audio format.

So I would see in the next three years – most likely, as I said before, we’ll have double the size of the audiobook catalog in Spanish, going from 25,000 to 50,000 or more, thanks to the introduction of artificial intelligence, especially for backlist titles and also especially for authors that are not well known or category niches. Bestsellers and big authors will be narrated with human voice. But I think it will be a positive side effect of the introduction of artificial intelligence in the audio space.

**KENNEALLY:** Radio entities with the largest potential audiences see far less return in this space than newcomer platforms, including subscription services. So what are the business realities of this industry?

**CELAYA:** Yeah, this is very interesting, because you have these two formats, podcasts and the radio space, and then audiobooks in the publishing space. Podcasts and the radio space have over 4 billion listeners worldwide. Half of these radio listeners listen to podcasts. So they have a huge reach. Whereas in the audiobook space, we have close to 1 billion listeners worldwide. It’s a huge size, but compared to radio and podcasters, basically they double the size. But in terms of revenue – as we know, podcasts and radio are based on advertising revenues, and those have come down in the last five years due to several factors – wars in Europe and the Middle East and economic crises. Basically, with half of the size of the listeners, the audiobook format basically generates the same amount of money that radio and podcasts do together. So although podcasts and radio have a bigger reach, audiobooks have a better monetization return on investment for the content providers.

**KENNEALLY:** Javier, you organized a special day-long conference in Madrid on February 27<sup>th</sup> for audio sector professionals. What was on the program, and what was the mood among the audience?

**CELAYA:** Yes. It was the first edition of Audio Day PARIX celebrated in Madrid on February 27<sup>th</sup>, and we had over 250 professionals from the publishing sector attending this conference. It was a one-day-long event attended by 35 international and national speakers. We had, as I mentioned before, Michele Cobb doing the keynote speaker at the beginning of the session, but we also had Sara Lloyd from Pan Macmillan talking about artificial intelligence in the publishing industry. We also had Karl Berglund, who is an author of a new book called *Reading Audio Readers*, which basically for the first time, someone has done an analysis of the behavior and habits of the audio listeners behind streaming services. Storytel provided this professor with a lot of aggregated data about



this behavior and actually provided a lot of very good insights about what's going on on the daily consumption of audiobooks on the streaming services.

There is a lot of expectations. We look ourselves to the US audio industry. You guys have been for the last 25 years or more selling first cassettes, then CDs, and now digital formats. It's a healthy double-digit growing industry year by year. And we aim to have also that industry complement to the print and ebook. Michele provided that today, it represents 11% of the total revenues of publishers. As I said, today in the Spanish markets, it's less than 1%. So we still have a lot of room to grow. All the attendees were very excited, because they see this future road ahead of growth in the publishing industry through this new format.

KENNEALLY: And you must be excited yourself, Javier. You're a real evangelist for this space.

CELAYA: Finally, after a decade, we have a business. We have an industry. We have all the players, all the Audibles, the Storytels, the Podimos, hopefully next will be Spotify also with their audiobook category in the Spanish market. So yes, now it's a reality, and it's a growing business that will further enlarge the publishing sector in all their different formats – print, ebooks, and audio.

KENNEALLY: Javier Celaya, founder of dosdoce.com, thank you for speaking with me.  
*Gracias.*

CELAYA: *Muchas gracias.*

KENNEALLY: That's all for now. Our producer is Jeremy Brieske of Burst Marketing. You can subscribe to the program wherever you go for podcasts. You can also find Velocity of Content on YouTube as part of the CCC channel. I'm Christopher Kenneally. Thanks for joining me.

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