

Sur le journalisme – About Journalism – Sobre jornalismo
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Call for Articles
Sound Journalism

Deadline for Articles: March 15, 2026

Special Issue Editors:

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This issue of the journal, *Sur le journalisme - About Journalism - Sobre jornalismo* aims to study the specificities of sound journalism, i.e., journalism utilising sound to convey news, current affairs and other topical media content. Audio journalism might be defined firstly by its connection with the radio medium, but since the beginning of the 2000s, it can just as easily be placed in the podcast sector. Here sound is also the primary milieu and medium. Less expected perhaps, we find audio journalism invited into other domains: the live show (think for example of documentary theater or verbatim theater), museum exhibits or sound walks: what this tells us is that the wide field of audio journalism can be disseminated in multiple ways.

Even as radio is more than 100 years old, it is worth emphasizing how few studies there are that are dedicated to sound journalism. More generally, and comparatively within the larger field of media studies, radio remains under-examined. In France this is so despite over 20 years of work by the Grer (French Group of researchers focused on the study of radio) (Antoine, 2016). Is this because radio and podcasts address our ears, and the eye dominates – with some studies indicating 80% of our ‘cerebral faculties’ are dedicated to processing the visual (Alibert, 2008)? Yet, both in its appearance and evolution, and indeed in its near revolution if we include the impact of the podcast, an invitation awaits to revisit the characteristics of sound journalism. As is so often the case, technological innovations appear to have enabled initial and subsequent creation and development: for example, the ability to transmit sounds across distances, and to listen to them (in an increasingly individual and mobile way over the course of these combined inventions).

Axis/Theme 1: Specificities of audio journalism

What does the activity of informing through sound mean? How does the use of sound, in its broadest sense, influence the transmission of journalistic content? This axis is an invitation to interrogate the materiality of sound in journalism: voices, audio extracts, broadcast devices, but also the specificities of writing for sound, the rapport between writing and orality, presentation norms, production for storytelling and broadcasting. Contributions may reflect on formats and radiophonic sub-genres (news styled programs, news bulletins and news flashes, reportage, on air scripts and commentaries, audio ‘feature packages’, audio postcards, audio diaries and chronicles, interviews, press reviews...), but also on programming formats and time-slotted shows such as ‘mornings’ or ‘drive’ and audio magazine shows.

Particular attention could be focused on the audio information and production chain: how does the sound reach the transmitters? Who is responsible? What skills are involved? The work of journalists

and career pathways, whether on the air or behind the scenes, may be explored. Finally, the technical contexts and conditions for production may be another axis of exploration: from the analogue period to the digital, passing through mobile editing, what technological evolutions have transformed working practices? What might be the consequences of compression or of the recent portability of audiofiles on the quality or nature of the news and content being produced? More generally, what has changed with the digital, in the production of audio journalism? (Deleu, 2012)

Axis/Theme 2: The political dimension of audio journalism

Long before the rise of the Internet, radio enabled the real-time dissemination of information across the world, playing a central role in the circulation of news and in citizens' access to information. However, this accessibility has always been conditioned by existing political regimes, which may authorize or restrict freedom of expression on the airwaves. This axis invites contributions that explore the tensions between audio journalism and political power through historical case studies (such as May 1968 or the free radio movement in France), postcolonial contexts (strategies of information control deployed by colonial states), or contemporary configurations — including current forms of censorship or state influence, as well as the development of populist radio stations seeking to shape democratic processes (Mort, 2024). Contributions may also focus on on investigative audio journalism by examining the place of inquiry within this field, as well as the editorial formats and production conditions that enable radio outlets to uncover and disseminate original information (for example, Secrets d'info on France Inter). Other contributions may explore the social and political functions of audio journalism across national or local contexts, including its role in fostering community cohesion, delivering service-oriented information (Neveu, 2019), and contributing to the structuring of the media landscape (McDonald & Starkey, 2017). Finally, this axis also invites close attention to issues of gender, diversity, and discrimination. To what extent do women's voices remain stigmatized? What forms of inequality persist in access to airtime and to positions of responsibility? Through analyses of discourse, training trajectories, or professional practices, contributions are encouraged to examine the power relations that structure the field of audio news production.

Axis/Theme 3: New forms of narrative in sound journalism

This axis of inquiry concerns the emergence and diversification of narrative formats in audio journalism, from the radiophonic documentary to news and other informational podcasts. From the early days of radio, longer forms such as radio magazine shows, 'features', fiction and documentaries evolved to complement live news, but remained in the minority except for some public service broadcasting (PSB) channels. The rise of podcasts from the 2000s built on those longer form programs already a characteristic of PSB outlets around the world, to revitalize further journalistic and other storytelling genres and forms (Madsen, 2010; 2025), for example by re-introducing serial nonfiction formats, also making possible more personal, often introspective or immersive narratives (Madsen, 2013; 2018/2023). In the USA as France, the UK and Australia, successful radio media formats (like This American Life, Serial, The Daily, L'Heure du Monde, Code Source) and independent studios (Binge Audio, Novel, Louie Media, Gimlet, Nouvelles Écoutes, Arte Radio, Radiotopia, Inside Podcast and so many more) multiplied the proposals we have now available for listening. Genres and forms mixed and innovated as podcasting also attracted talented producers and storytellers who created compelling investigative series (Transfert, Cerno, Shame on You), from true crime exposés to challenging the courts and overturning some cases (Serial, In the Dark). Stories come in many forms, traditional journalistic formats with commentary, interviews (La Poudre, The Rest is Politics) to those of a more literary or speculative bent (S-Town, Radiolab, Love+Radio). Others offer alternative approaches or mix forms (Programme B, Les couilles sur la table, Un podcast à soi, Arkan's 2025 Sweet Little Human; the Australian ABC series, No Feeling is Final).

We anticipate contributions that examine the narrative, professional and economic specificities of these formats. Podcasts favour a more free and personal writing, marked by the “I”, often of a strong journalistic character, with a supple approach to duration and often serialization. Borrowing sometimes from fiction or at the level of storytelling, podcasts are giving rise to new debates around the spectacularisation of news and information. Proposals can also explore still unstable economic models of podcasts (subscriptions, crowdfunding, acquisitions, closures like that of BoxSons and impacts on public service media models). These new forms invite us to think about the podcast as not only a new platform, but as a fully-fledged editorial space, bringing about reconfigurations of audio journalism.

Submission Instructions:

Final deadline for completed manuscripts (between 30 000 et 50 000 characters, including notes at the bottom of the page and a Bibliography) is March 15, 2026. Send to slj@ulb.be or direct on the website : <https://revue.surlejournisme.com/slj/about/submissions>. Please indicate in the Subject Line of your message that you wish to submit to this Special Issue. Articles can be written in English, French, Portuguese or Spanish. All articles will be double blind peer reviewed.

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