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## Un mundo violento: a geek podcast for geeks, created by geeks. A Case Study of David Sainz's Audio Fiction

*Un mundo violento: un podcast friki para frikis y creado por frikis. Estudio de caso de la ficción sonora de David Sainz*

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**Abstract:**

This study examines the dynamics of geek narrative construction and fandom formation surrounding the fiction podcast *Un mundo violento* (2021–2025) as a representative case of these cultural practices within the podcasting landscape. The main objective is to explore how geek imaginaries and community participation are articulated around this independent production. A qualitative case study was conducted on the 30 episodes across the podcast's three seasons, combining content analysis of the audio corpus, digital ethnographic observation of the fan community on the iVoox platform, and an in-depth interview with the podcast's creator. The findings show that the characters are built around recognizable geek archetypes that evolve over time, fostering processes of audience identification and appropriation. In addition, a high degree of intertextuality and transmedia expansion reinforces the narrative universe. The findings suggest that fandom constitutes a key factor in the project's economic and creative sustainability, indicating that podcasting can foster the development of participatory geek cultural communities within independent audio storytelling.

**Keywords:** podcast, audio drama, fandom, geek culture, crowdfunding, engagement.

**Resumen:**

En el presente estudio se analizan las dinámicas de construcción narrativa friki y articulación del *fandom* en torno al podcast de ficción *Un mundo violento* (2021–2025), como un caso representativo de estas prácticas culturales en el ámbito del *podcasting*. El objetivo general de la investigación es examinar cómo se articulan los imaginarios frikis y las dinámicas de participación de la comunidad en torno a esta producción independiente. Se adopta una metodología cualitativa basada en un estudio de caso de los 30 episodios pertenecientes a las tres temporadas del podcast, que combina el análisis de contenido del corpus sonoro, la observación etnográfica digital de la comunidad *fandom* en la plataforma iVoox y la realización de una entrevista en profundidad a su creador. Los resultados muestran que los personajes se construyen a partir de arquetipos frikis reconocibles que evolucionan favoreciendo procesos de identificación y apropiación por parte de la audiencia. Asimismo, se identifica un nivel

alto de intertextualidad y una expansión *transmedia* que refuerzan el universo narrativo. Los hallazgos permiten plantear que el *fandom* constituye un elemento clave en la sostenibilidad económica y creativa del proyecto, lo que sugiere que el podcast puede favorecer la creación de comunidades culturales participativas y *geeks* en narrativas sonoras independientes.

**Palabras clave:** *podcast*, ficción sonora, *fandom*, friki, *crowdfunding*, *engagement*.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, podcasting has consolidated its position within the broader audio ecosystem, with the sector recording a fifth consecutive year of growth in 2026 (Prodigioso Volcán, 2026). Despite this sustained expansion, audio fiction accounts for less than 10% of podcast production and remains largely concentrated within streaming platforms and the catalogues of established radio broadcasters (Pedrero Esteban et al., 2025).

Audio fiction represents a particularly complex form of scripted audio storytelling, integrating voice, sound effects, silence, and music to construct narrative worlds through sound. In recent years, this form has attracted increasing scholarly attention (Aguilera & Blanco, 2017; Rodríguez-Pallarés, 2017; López-Villafranca, 2019; Hernando-Lera et al., 2020; Toyos, 2022; Ruiz-Gómez & Legórburu, 2023; López-Villafranca, 2024; Carlos-García, 2025). Although platforms such as iVoox and Spotify host a wide range of independent productions, audio fiction has historically been closely associated with the support and resources of major media organizations, as illustrated by Podium Podcast's *El gran apagón* (2016). More recently, however, independent production has gained greater visibility through creators such as Matsuki, Bartual, and Sainz. The latter, widely recognized for the success of the web series *Malviviendo*, created *Un mundo violento* (2021–2025), the case examined in this study. The podcast provides a particularly relevant case for examining the intersection of audio fiction, geek culture, and fandom. Combining elements of absurd comedy with references drawn from geek culture, the production has developed a loyal audience community whose participation has

contributed to its financial sustainability through crowdfunding. Against this background, this study examines how geek culture and fandom dynamics are articulated in *Un mundo violento* (2021–2025), focusing on character construction, intertextual and cross-platform references, and forms of audience participation. Through a case-study approach, the research explores the relationship between audio fiction, participatory culture, and the sustainability of independent cultural production. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on podcasting by examining the ways in which audience communities may move beyond consumption and interpretation to participate in the economic and symbolic consolidation of independent audio projects.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. THE FANDOM PHENOMENON IN PODCASTING

Contemporary audio fiction is characterised by the prominence of dystopian narratives and narrative structures closely resembling television series (López-Villafranca, 2023), attracting creators from diverse audiovisual backgrounds. Productions such as *Adolescentes* and *Un mundo violento* exemplify this tendency. However, the distinctive feature of the latter lies in its fandom community, which, through interaction and discussion (García-Marín, 2020a), not only consumes content but also functions as a fundamental support mechanism for the podcast's continuity.

Within the European audio ecosystem, fandom operates not merely as a receptive audience but as an active agent that contributes to project sustainability through patronage and social media promotion (Mañas-Pellejero & Paz, 2022). Similar dynamics can be observed in conversational podcasts with activist-oriented communities, such as *Estirando el chicle* (Piñeiro-Otero, 2021), as well as in listener-supported online radio stations such as *Radiocable* and *Carne Cruda*. Narrative podcasts, however, also demonstrate a unique capacity for fostering audience loyalty (López & Monteiro, 2021). The podcast *Serial* (2014) marked a turning point by inspiring the emergence of “metapodcasts” dedicated to analysing its episodes. In Spain, a comparable phenomenon occurred with *Funcionarios del Tiempo*, an unofficial podcast created by fans of the television series *El Ministerio del Tiempo*.

This narrative expansion relies on transmedia strategies that reinforce emotional engagement “both because of the ease of multiplatform production and distribution and because of their emotional impact on users, without overlooking their business-generation potential” (Pedrero-Esteban et al., 2023, p. 200). Within this context, García-Marín (2020a) introduced the concept of the “transpodcast,” whose logic is based on the distribution of customised content and user interaction through comments, likes, and subscriptions. Podcasting therefore encourages narrowcasting, defined as highly specialised broadcasts directed at specific niche audiences (Pedrero-Esteban & García Lastra, 2019), and redefines communication through a more horizontal model. This new engagement paradigm depends on the nature of the medium, consumption habits, and the media literacy of creators, moving away from the traditional one-way hierarchy of legacy media.

## 2.2. PODCASTING AS A MEDIUM OF ENGAGEMENT

Beyond measurable interactions such as likes and shares, engagement refers to an emotional connection and a cognitive and affective experience that transforms followers into members of an active community (Broersma, 2019; Leandro et al., 2025). In this context, audience participation has reshaped media production processes (Jenkins, 2012), establishing a new framework for entertainment industries.

More specifically, podcasting has emerged as a particularly effective channel for developing meaningful connections, especially among Generation Z and Millennial audiences, who value authenticity and on-demand consumption (Berry, 2018). Recent studies (Leandro et al., 2025) suggest that the medium reinforces a sense of belonging through shared identities between creators and listeners. This capacity for connection becomes even stronger in narrative formats, where the portrayal of subjective experiences fosters collaboration and audience involvement (López & Monteiro-Homssi, 2021). As García-Marín (2020b) argues, podcast communities are constructed through the combination of online and offline interactions, creating a “robust grassroots community” that facilitates narrative development and collective speculation.

To understand the success of productions such as those created by David Sainz, it is necessary to connect audio engagement with the psychology of geek culture. The specialised literature (Woo, 2012; Parsakia & Jafari, 2023) identifies three key drivers within this community:

1. Active participation: Ranging from intertextual discussion to crowdfunding. As Peeples et al. (2018) point out, fandom passion motivates individuals to create something new from the original work, transforming narrative into an act of “confabulation” (Le Guin, 2025).
2. Sense of belonging: Geek culture functions as a refuge from social individualism by providing networks of solidarity and reinforcing the self-esteem of non-normative identities (Woo, 2012).
3. Cooperative escapism: Unlike passive forms of escapism, geek escapism is creative and proactive. It enables individuals to perceive themselves as co-creators of alternative worlds, confronting life circumstances in which their capacity for social intervention may be limited (Peeples et al., 2018).

The intersection between the horizontal nature of podcasting and the participatory needs of geek communities generates a narrowcasting ecosystem in which content is not merely consumed but engaged with and co-created.

Similarly, engagement should not be understood solely as an indicator of interaction or loyalty; rather, it constitutes a phenomenon encompassing affective, identity-related, and participatory dimensions, particularly relevant within fan communities.

### 2.3. GEEK CULTURE IN PODCASTING

In addition to fandom, there is geek culture, whose genealogy can be traced back to the term *freak*, with its foundational milestone being Tod Browning’s film of the same name (1932). Its impact and subsequent censorship initiated a resemanticization of the word toward the non-normative and the marginal, turning it into a site for the representation of alternative identities (Krugman, 2018). This transformation became consolidated during the 1960s as a category associated with counterculture, ranging from Gilbert

Shelton's *underground* comics to the music of Frank Zappa, shifting the term away from its original pejorative meaning toward the figure of the *outsider* or social misfit.

In the Spanish-speaking context, the Royal Spanish Academy incorporated the term *friki* into its dictionary in 2012, reflecting the gradual social normalization of a label that, much like the Anglo-American concept of *geek*, has evolved from functioning as a stigma to becoming a category of cultural self-identification (Peeples et al., 2018; McCain et al., 2015). Nevertheless, recent scholarship warns that neither geek identity nor *geek* culture constitutes a homogeneous reality; rather, they represent diverse spaces shaped by differences in gender, generation, cultural capital, and forms of participation (Woo, 2018; Scott, 2019). In this regard, Camacho-Quiroz (2023) conceives geek culture as an ecosystem composed of multiple *fandoms*, including those associated with anime, video games, and cosplay, articulated around the imaginaries of fantasy, science fiction, and horror. It is important, however, to distinguish between *friki* or *geek*, which primarily refer to forms of identity and cultural affiliation that are heterogeneous and subject to ongoing processes of negotiation and social legitimation (Woo, 2018; Scott, 2019), and *fandom*, which refers to the communities and practices of interpretation, appropriation, and participation developed around specific texts and cultural products (Jenkins, 2006; Hills, 2002; Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2017).

Recent studies further emphasize that these communities not only foster collaboration and a sense of belonging but may also generate internal hierarchies, disputes over legitimacy, and mechanisms of exclusion that complicate the fan experience (Johnson, 2017; Scott, 2019).

Accordingly, both geek culture and *fandom* can be understood less as fixed and homogeneous categories than as dynamic spaces of identity negotiation in which forms of belonging, cultural practices, and power relations are articulated.

Narrative functions as the central organizing principle of this identity. Although storytelling is a fundamental human survival strategy (Huston, 2017), geek culture takes this condition to an extreme by providing its members with behavioural models through which to confront reality (Camacho-Quiroz, 2023). Within these communities,

individuals exercise a form of creative agency that extends beyond passive escapism, inhabiting fictional universes as though they were real through practices such as *role-playing* and *fan fiction* (McCain et al., 2015).

Particularly noteworthy is the prevalence of misfit or marginal characters within these narratives, reflecting an “emotional architecture of beautified failure” and a marked opposition to the *mainstream*. Finally, despite the significant growth in scholarly research on podcasting since 2019 (González-De la Mano & Sánchez-Serrano, 2024), limited attention has been paid to the relationship between podcasting and geek culture. Consequently, the present study constitutes to this emerging area of research by examining the intersection between podcasting, geek culture, and fandom within the field of communication studies.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of this research is to analyze the phenomenon of geek culture and *fandom* dynamics in the fiction podcast *Un mundo violento* (2021–2025). To this end, the study adopts a case-study approach integrating narrative content analysis, an examination of the community through the lens of participatory culture, and data triangulation through an in-depth interview with its creator.

To achieve this general objective, the following specific objectives are proposed:

- a. To examine the construction of fictional characters, paying particular attention to their incorporation into geek-culture imaginaries and to the processes of identification and appropriation by audiences.
- b. To identify and analyze the intertextual references and forms of multiplatform extension present in the podcast, assessing their role in the expansion of the narrative universe.
- c. To analyze the dynamics of participation, interaction, and meaning-making within the fan community from the perspective of participatory culture and active *fandom*.

- d. To explore, through an in-depth interview with the podcast's creator, the strategies of content creation, narrative development, and audience engagement employed by the producers.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The selection of *Un mundo violento* as a case study is justified for several reasons. First, it is a particularly relevant example of independent audio fiction in Spain, having developed outside the sphere of major media corporations and sustained through participatory funding models. Second, it stands out for its longevity and consolidation among audiences, with three seasons released between 2021 and 2025 and an active community of followers whose support has contributed to ensuring its continuity throughout this period. Furthermore, its combination of absurd comedy, references to *geek* culture, and sophisticated sound design provides an opportunity to explore the expressive possibilities of contemporary fiction podcasting beyond traditional models. Finally, the prior reputation of its creator, David Sainz, together with the podcast's ability to articulate narrative and production strategies characteristic of the digital ecosystem, make *Un mundo violento* a particularly relevant case through which to examine the evolution and professionalization of independent audio fiction.

This research adopts an interpretive qualitative approach, structured as a case study (Yin, 2009) focused on the fiction podcast *Un mundo violento* (2021–2025). This design facilitates an in-depth examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context and is especially suitable for the study of emerging cultural practices such as podcasting and digital *fandom*.

##### 4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

To conduct the study, a methodological triangulation was implemented, enabling the object of analysis to be examined from the perspectives of production, text, and reception, in line with cultural and audience studies (Hall, 2012; Jenkins, 2006). The case study is therefore based on a mixed methodological strategy with a predominantly qualitative orientation that combines:

1. Content analysis of the audio corpus,
2. Analysis of the fan community in digital environments, and
3. In-depth interviews with the podcast's creator.

#### 4.2. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

##### a) Content Analysis

A qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) is conducted with the aim of identifying character construction, elements of the geek cultural imaginary, and intertextual and *transmedia* references. The analysis is based on a mixed category system (deductive-inductive), developed from the theoretical framework (Jenkins, 2006) and refined throughout the coding process. To this end, an analytical active-listening strategy is employed, inspired by Spinelli and Dann's (2019) concept of *close analytical listening*, which involves careful, segmented, and reflexive listening aimed at identifying narrative structures as well as sonic, discursive, and emotional elements. The following **technical analysis sheet** was developed:

**Table 1.** Content Analysis Coding Sheet for *Un mundo violento*

| Dimension                                   | Variable                | Indicators                                   | Values / Categories                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Formal variables<br>Identification          | Episode                 | Episode number / title /                     | Open                                                                                                                                    |
|                                             | Duration                | Total minutes                                | Numerical                                                                                                                               |
| Content variables<br>Character construction | Character type          | Narrative role                               | Protagonist / coprotagonist/ secondary character / antagonist/ supporting character                                                     |
|                                             | Character traits        | Psychological and social characteristics     | Archetype, development, complexity                                                                                                      |
|                                             | Geek archetype          | Association with geek imaginaries            | Hero, antihero, nerd, outsider, etc.                                                                                                    |
|                                             | Type of geek character  | Classification according to character traits | Geek (technology-oriented, music-oriented), Gamer, Hacker, Fanboy, Otaku-manga, K-pop fan, Cosplayer, Strawberry, Epic Freak, Immortal. |
|                                             | Character development   | Changes throughout the episode/series        | High / medium / low / none                                                                                                              |
| Intertextual variables<br>Geek imaginary    | Cultural references     | Presence of geek-related elements            | Cinema, comic, video games, sci-fi, fantasy                                                                                             |
|                                             | Referential intensity   | Frequency and density of references          | High / medium / low                                                                                                                     |
|                                             | Narrative function      | Use of reference                             | Humour / world building / fan service                                                                                                   |
| Intertextuality<br>Transmedia               | Type of intertextuality | Form of reference                            | Explicit / implicit                                                                                                                     |
|                                             | Source of reference     | Medium of origin                             | Television series, film, book, pop culture                                                                                              |
|                                             | Transmedia expansion    | Extension of the narrative universe          | Yes/ No                                                                                                                                 |
|                                             | Type of expansion       | Form of expansion                            | Social media / additional content / spin-off                                                                                            |

Source: authors' own elaboration

## b) Fan Community Analysis

A qualitative digital observation approach (Hine, 2011) was employed, focusing on the analysis of the dynamics of participation, interaction, and meaning-making developed by the *Un mundo violento* fan community throughout the three seasons released between 2021 and 2025. Observation was conducted primarily on the iVoox platform, as it constituted the most active space of interaction between creators and audiences.

This analysis was complemented by a review of the project's official social media profiles and the participatory funding initiatives associated with its *crowdfunding* campaigns.

The unit of analysis consisted of user comments posted on podcast episodes, as well as interactions generated around the project's support campaigns. Both comments evaluating individual episodes and those related to characters, cultural references, fan-generated theories, expressions of support for the creative team, and manifestations of economic and emotional engagement were collected and analyzed. In total, 1,841 comments published on iVoox were examined, together with the most relevant messages and interactions associated with the collective funding campaigns.

The analysis is grounded in the concept of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006) and in *fandom* studies (Hills, 2016), paying particular attention to practices such as user-to-user interaction, the collective interpretation of storylines, the collaborative construction of meaning, the expression of affective attachments to characters, and the community's involvement in ensuring the continuity of the project. Through an inductive-deductive thematic coding process, four main analytical categories were identified: (a) references to geek culture and the series' intertextuality; (b) comments focused on characters and narrative development; (c) expressions of support, loyalty, and recognition directed toward the creative team; and (d) manifestations of active participation linked to audience *engagement* and the economic sustainability of the podcast through *crowdfunding*. These categories made it possible to interpret the role of *fandom* in both the consolidation of the community and the sustainability of the project.

**Table 2.** Analysis of the fan community

| Community and fandom | Audience mentions     | Explicit references to fans      | Yes / No                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | Engagement strategies | Calls for audience participation | Direct / Indirect                                                                                                                                                       |
|                      | Fan participation     | Evidence of interaction          | Comments, social media activity, derivative content (frequency; themes: characters, storylines, geek universe, support, others)<br>Number of comments, likes, downloads |
|                      | Fandom influence      | Impact on the narrative          | High / Medium / Low / None                                                                                                                                              |

Source: authors' own elaboration

c) In-depth interview (Hernández & García, 2008)

A semi-structured interview was conducted with the podcast's creator, David Sainz, with the aim of exploring the processes of narrative creation, audience engagement strategies, and perceptions of *fandom* and its influence on the development of the project. The interview was conducted online in March 2026, and the participant's responses were transcribed following the recording.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. FORMAL VARIABLES

The three seasons of the fiction podcast *Un mundo violento* were analyzed. In total, the corpus comprised 30 episodes, representing 726.46 minutes of listening time (12 hours, 6 minutes, and 27 seconds), to which the *close analytical listening* technique was applied.

*Un mundo violento* is a comedy podcast that revolves around a group of social outcasts who, following an explosion that triggers a wave of aggression across the population, discover that they are immune to the phenomenon. Through their imagination and

despite their limited practical skills, these friends must confront a hostile world and learn how to survive within it.

## 5.2. CONTENT VARIABLES

### 5.2.1. *Character construction*

The series features four main characters, although two additional co-protagonists are introduced during the first season and gradually acquire substantial narrative relevance. The analysis reveals that the characters do not conform to conventional heroic models; rather, they embody identities traditionally positioned at the margins of popular culture. The narrative reconfigures the geek figure as a subject capable of confronting conflict and leading collective action, thereby challenging the historical stereotypes associated with social marginality. In this way, the series constructs a process of symbolic legitimation of geek identity, transforming forms of knowledge traditionally linked to leisure activities, such as video games, role-playing games, fantasy, and popular culture, into valuable resources for survival within the narrative universe.

### 5.2.2. *Geek archetypes and the evolution of archetypes*

The archetypes identified are grounded in the typologies proposed by Woo (2012), McCain et al. (2015), and Camacho-Quiroz (2023), who distinguish different modes of affiliation with *geek* culture according to patterns of media consumption, cultural production, and community identification. Rather than constituting fixed categories, these archetypes operate as flexible identity positions through which audiences can recognize and share common cultural codes.

Kai, portrayed by David Sainz himself, embodies a hybrid geek archetype situated between the technological *geek* and the *fanboy*: a character fascinated by technological knowledge and deeply connected to popular culture, including video games, science fiction, and comic books, as well as being an avid follower of the *gaming* universe and video game consoles. Roldi, in turn, represents a combination of the *cosplayer* geek, who engages in the performative embodiment of a specific character, in his case a medieval archer, and the *epic freak*, characterized by an obsessive devotion to *The Lord*

*of the Rings*. Morkon is portrayed as an immortal character whose identity is shaped by his fascination with role-playing games, placing him within the same geek spectrum as the other protagonists, with whom he shares cultural references and leisure practices. Finally, Tania corresponds to the profile of the gothic geek, combining elements of dark and romantic aesthetics with features typical of the gothic subculture, while also fitting the archetype of the immortal geek through her dedication to role-playing games.

Two additional characters, Jepardo and Benita, are introduced over the course of the first season. Jepardo embodies the *quinqui* archetype, an heir to the antiheroes of Spain's *quinqui* cinema, a form of social cinema associated with the democratic transition that was later reappropriated by late-1990s subcultures and eventually incorporated into geek culture through ironic and affective forms of consumption. Within this framework, he becomes integrated into the geek imaginary as a distinctly local and recognizable figure: a charismatic, marginal, and *outsider* antihero. From a narrative perspective, he functions as a counterpoint to the other protagonists, contributing a comic and pragmatic register that helps stabilize the tone of the story.

Benita, by contrast, is a nun who departs markedly from conventional representations of religious figures. Rather than conforming to traditional stereotypes, she is portrayed as a rock-and-roll nun who wears sunglasses and undergoes significant character development throughout the narrative. Initially unwilling to swear and frequently scandalized by Jepardo's language, she gradually adopts a harsher and more aggressive vocabulary, eventually mirroring the behaviour she once condemned.

Secondary characters typically function either as obstacles that hinder the protagonists' progress or as major antagonists. This is the case with the inhabitants of the Citadel, who seek to eliminate the protagonists. Other secondary figures serve as helpers, such as the scientists who provide vaccines that allow the protagonists to overcome their infection, or Poncho, a vigilante cowboy-like character who appears at key moments to assist them in overcoming critical challenges.

**Table 3.** Character construction and evolution

| Character | Predominant Archetype     | Cultural Reference                       | Narrative Function                                           | Evolution                                                  |
|-----------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kai       | Tech geek / fanboy        | Gaming culture and science fiction       | Improvised leader and mediator                               | Transforms from a consumer of fiction into an active agent |
| Roldi     | Cosplayer / epic geek     | Epic fantasy and role-playing games      | Comic relief and constant reference to the fantasy imaginary | Reaffirms his geek identity as a survival tool             |
| Morkon    | Immortal role-player      | Role-playing games                       | Connector between fantasy and the post-apocalyptic world     | Develops towards increasingly ambiguous positions          |
| Tania     | Gothic geek               | Gothic subculture and role-playing games | Emotional and moral counterpoint                             | Gradually assumes antagonistic functions                   |
| Jepardo   | Quinqui outsider          | Spanish <i>quinqui</i> cinema            | Comic disruptor                                              | Progressively integrates into the group                    |
| Benita    | Religious anti-stereotype | Rock culture and absurd humour           | Subversion of expectations                                   | Undergoes a radical behavioural transformation             |

Source: authors' own elaboration

### 5.3. INTERTEXTUALITY AND TRANSMEDIA EXPANSION

Intertextual variables remain relatively consistent across the three seasons, with a predominantly high referential intensity. During the first and second seasons, fluctuations can be observed between high, medium, and low levels of referential density. However, this does not appear to affect audience *engagement*, as the characters explicitly acknowledge their geek identity in several episodes, and the highest levels of intertextual intensity tend to coincide with episodes focused on the protagonists. In the third season, intertextual intensity becomes both greater and more homogeneous, reaching a particularly notable level in the final episode.

The most common textual references relate to film, comics, video games, and television series. The predominant forms of intertextuality consist of references to films, television series, video games, and popular culture. A total of 269 references were identified. These are articulated around four major domains of the geek imaginary. In the field of

cinema, iconic titles such as *Conan*, *Terminator 2*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Star Wars* stand out. References to fictional characters include widely recognizable figures such as *Frodo*, *Thor*, *Batman*, and *Jon Snow*, alongside actors associated with the *star system*, including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Uma Thurman, and Nicolas Cage. This repertoire is further expanded through references to television series, comics, video games, and role-playing culture, including *Game of Thrones*, *Stranger Things*, *Death Note*, the DC universe, orcs, elves, and zombies. These are complemented by nostalgic references such as *Fraggle Rock*, the Spanish EGB educational generation, Bruce Lee, and VHS tapes. Contemporary and viral references also appear, ranging from Turkish soap operas to fan-created scenarios (*John Wick vs. T-Rex*) and *geek* allusions such as Schrödinger's paradox, collectively constructing a hybrid cultural landscape characteristic of contemporary *geek* culture.

The music composed by Jesús Calderón plays a significant role in the construction of the podcast's narrative universe. In several episodes, musical adaptations evoke soundtracks from well-known television series such as *Stranger Things* and *Lost* (*Ending Stranger Version*, *Ending Lost Version*), thereby reinforcing the story's intertextual dimension. These musical references, together with the broader set of cultural allusions, position both the protagonists and their audience within a shared generational horizon. This is a generation shaped by the cultural references of the 1980s and 1990s and generally ranging in age from 40 to 60 years old, sharing what may be described as a mature *geek* culture.

The project's creator, producer, and actor, David Sainz, explains the construction of these characters and their relationship with *geek* culture, as well as that of the creators and audience, as follows:

The characters in *Un mundo violento* are four *geeks* who suddenly get together to play *Dungeons & Dragons* at the age of forty in an apartment they rented specifically for that purpose. That was the level we were at, and the series is full of references because of our desire to relive those experiences. We used to play *Dungeons & Dragons* back then, and, generally speaking, we were not particularly good at sports. During those gaming sessions, we were a warrior, an elf, a paladin, and a wizard. Suddenly, we are given the opportunity to survive in a universe where you can actually become a paladin.

These intertextual references do not merely function as nods to a fan community of a particular generation. They are also deployed humorously to exaggerate situations, compare specific audiovisual products with particular storylines, and contribute to the construction of the podcast's own geek universe. Furthermore, references to audiovisual culture closely related to the script are a constant feature of the narrative. Mentions of plot points, narrative twists, or concepts such as *deus ex machina* are frequently employed to compare the podcast's fictional universe with that of other audiovisual works that constitute key reference points for the *fandom*.

Multiplatform circulation occurs primarily through the iVoox platform, where the community actively participates through comments, maintains a direct relationship with the creators, and gains access to exclusive content available only to patrons, as noted by Sainz (2026). The series is also distributed through other platforms, such as Spotify, where interactions are likewise generated, although less frequently and with a more limited degree of audience involvement. On the official Instagram profile of *Un mundo violento* (4,241 followers), photographs, *making-of* videos, cast greetings, and invitations to contribute through *crowdfunding* campaigns are regularly published. Nevertheless, David Sainz's personal Instagram account, which has a substantially larger following (267,000 followers), functions as the primary communication channel with his community, whose members engage across the entirety of his creative projects.

**Figure 1.** Cast Members and Production Team of *Un mundo violento* on Instagram



Source: Official Instagram Account of *Un mundo violento* Podcast

## 5.4. FANDOM COMMUNITY

### 5.4.1. *The Un mundo violento community*

The podcast benefited from an established fan base from its inception, consisting largely of followers of David Sainz's acclaimed web series *Malviviendo* (2008). This loyal community is described by Sainz (2026) as distinctly “geek” in character. *Un mundo violento* is a fiction podcast that combines a wide range of hybridized elements drawn from dystopian narratives, comics, video games, popular media culture, and geek references. Its content aligns closely with the interests, characters, and cultural preferences of geek *fandom*.

Sainz states that this relationship with the fandom has been maintained consistently over the years through social media, particularly via his Instagram account, which has more than 267,000 followers. The *Un mundo violento* community played a crucial role in sustaining the project during its second and third seasons through the crowdfunding platform Verkami. While the first season was distributed as exclusive content on iVoox and succeeded in generating revenue, the income generated was insufficient to cover personnel costs and the production efforts required by the series.

Through Instagram and the audio platforms where the podcast was distributed, David Sainz and the show's co-writer, Manuel Noguera, launched crowdfunding campaigns at the end of both the first and second seasons, encouraging the fandom to support the continuation of the project. As Sainz (2026) explains, “*people understand that we are ultimately individuals doing a job, and that we need to keep working in order to pay a mortgage or simply make a living*”.

The involvement of the fandom proved instrumental in making the project financially viable. According to Sainz (2026):

We managed, on two consecutive occasions, to raise €20,000 to produce two new seasons. The audience truly supported us, just as they had done with some of my previous projects, such as *Malviviendo*. The public became a direct part of this story, helping bring it to life through their support, not only through comments and likes on

social media but in a much more tangible way through funding and budget contributions.

#### 5.4.2. Engagement strategies

Among the principal *engagement* strategies employed with the community was the production of exclusive content for patrons on iVoox. During the first season, additional material was made available through the bonus episode *Kai's Diary*, complemented by calls for collaboration and subscription embedded within promotional audio messages at the end of each season. Once a sufficient number of episodes had been produced and a stable audience had been established, the creators turned to crowdfunding through Verkami, offering a range of benefits to supporters. As Sainz (2026) explains:

That was when crowdfunding began to make sense, because by then there was already an army of fans eager to ensure that the story would continue. [...] We realized that people were not contributing in order to obtain a T-shirt; they were contributing so that we could continue telling the story they wanted to hear. Ultimately, I believe that creating in the audience the desire to keep listening to a story they enjoy is the key.

The principal *engagement* mechanisms centred on rewards. According to Sainz (2026), these were initially digital in nature: "*the scripts, the exclusive soundtrack, and a special episode. One particularly successful initiative was a bonus chapter that was available only to patrons.*"

As the community became more consolidated, the rewards evolved into physical and experiential benefits. In Sainz's words: "one reward was attending the final live show and spending time with us. There were also mugs designed by Diego Villalba, the actor who played Jepardo, and we organized a dinner with our listeners. We had dinner with three people who openly admitted that meeting us was not what mattered to them; what they really wanted was for the project to continue moving forward" (Sainz, 2026).

Shortly after the launch of the first crowdfunding campaign, the project achieved 26% of its funding target on Verkami. By the end of the third season, *Un mundo violento* had surpassed 1.5 million listens and comfortably exceeded its financial goals. Although the initial objective ranged between €15,000 and €17,000, both campaigns ultimately raised

approximately €20,000 each, demonstrating the strong commitment and support of the fan community.

**Figure 2.** Verkami Crowdfunding Campaign for *Un mundo violento*



Source: Verkami

Another *engagement* strategy involved cross-promotion with screenwriter Manuel Bartual, widely known for the fiction podcast *Biotopía*. Bartual recommended Sainz's podcast, which, according to Sainz himself, was the result of a long-standing professional and personal relationship:

*We met a long time ago, and our careers have developed in parallel. We are constantly recommending each other's work because we genuinely enjoy what the other creates. I think this is part of word-of-mouth promotion, and it worked very well. It has been one of the greatest satisfactions of this project because we truly loved making it, whereas other projects have not achieved the same level of success as Un mundo violento.*

This cross-promotional strategy, together with the growth in audience numbers generated through recommendations from creators such as Bartual, provided Sainz with greater creative freedom:

*Being able to write a story in which a helicopter crashes into a Tyrannosaurus rex without having to financially ruin myself in the process is incredible. As a writer, it opens up an entire universe of possibilities, which is one of the great strengths of audio fiction. I believe audiences embraced the creative freedom that we ourselves chose to embrace.*

#### 5.4.3. Fandom participation and engagement with content

The participation of the *fandom* was analyzed through the iVoox platform, as, according to Sainz (2026), audience interaction was more direct and accessible within this environment:

The relationship between creator and listener is much more direct and much easier on this platform. Beyond the comments section, there is a wall within the channel where users can interact, and it is very easy to respond to them. It resembles a forum. In addition, there were the rewards we offered through Verkami. At the end of each season, we released a special episode, a kind of behind-the-scenes discussion in which we talked about the entire season, how it had been produced, who each character was, and the audience itself also took part.

**Figure 3.** *Un mundo violento* iVoox Channel



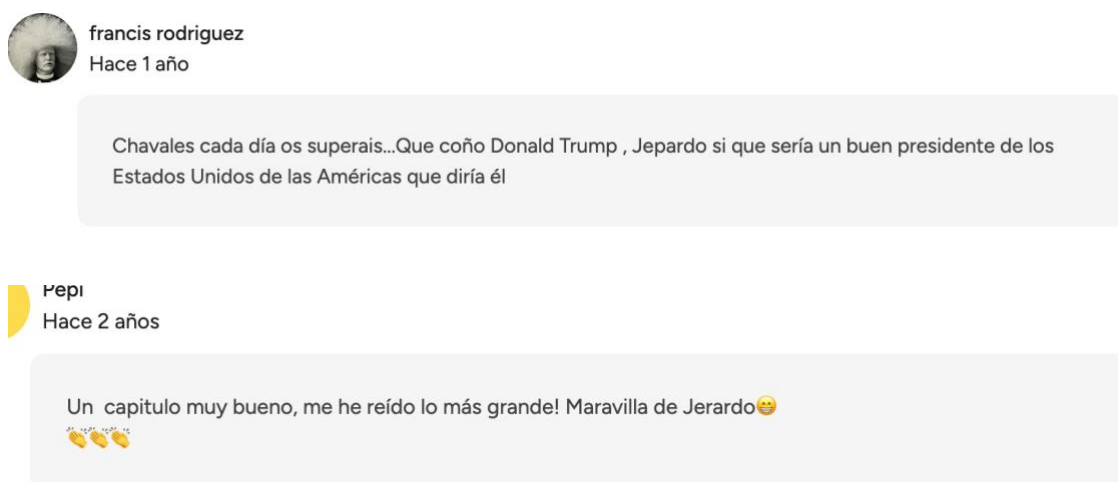
Source: iVoox

The frequency of comments across the different seasons on the iVoox platform was analyzed. The total number of comments posted on the episodes (1,841 in total) ranged from 6 to 136, with the first episode receiving the highest number of comments. Overall, the series averaged 40 comments per episode. The number of "likes" (16,140 in total) ranged from 195 to 1.1K, with the first episode likewise accumulating the highest number of comments and likes. Exclusive or bonus episodes received the lowest levels of audience interaction, both in terms of comments and likes. At the time of analysis, the podcast had accumulated a total of 2,086,388 downloads. The episode with the highest number of downloads was the first, reaching 140.4K downloads.

The most frequent comments were not focused on technical aspects or isolated evaluations of specific episodes; rather, they concentrated on characters, cultural references, and narrative continuity. This pattern suggests a mode of reception oriented toward the fictional universe as a whole rather than toward individual episodes, a characteristic commonly associated with *fandom* communities as described by Jenkins (2006).

Regarding the predominant themes identified in the comments, the most common were references to the geek universe of *Un mundo violento* and expressions of support and congratulations directed toward the creative team. Furthermore, the recurring presence of comments concerning Jepardo indicates that certain characters function as collective points of identification within the community (see **Figure 4**). The most extensively discussed storylines corresponded to major narrative turning points and season finales, which generated particularly high levels of audience engagement and interaction.

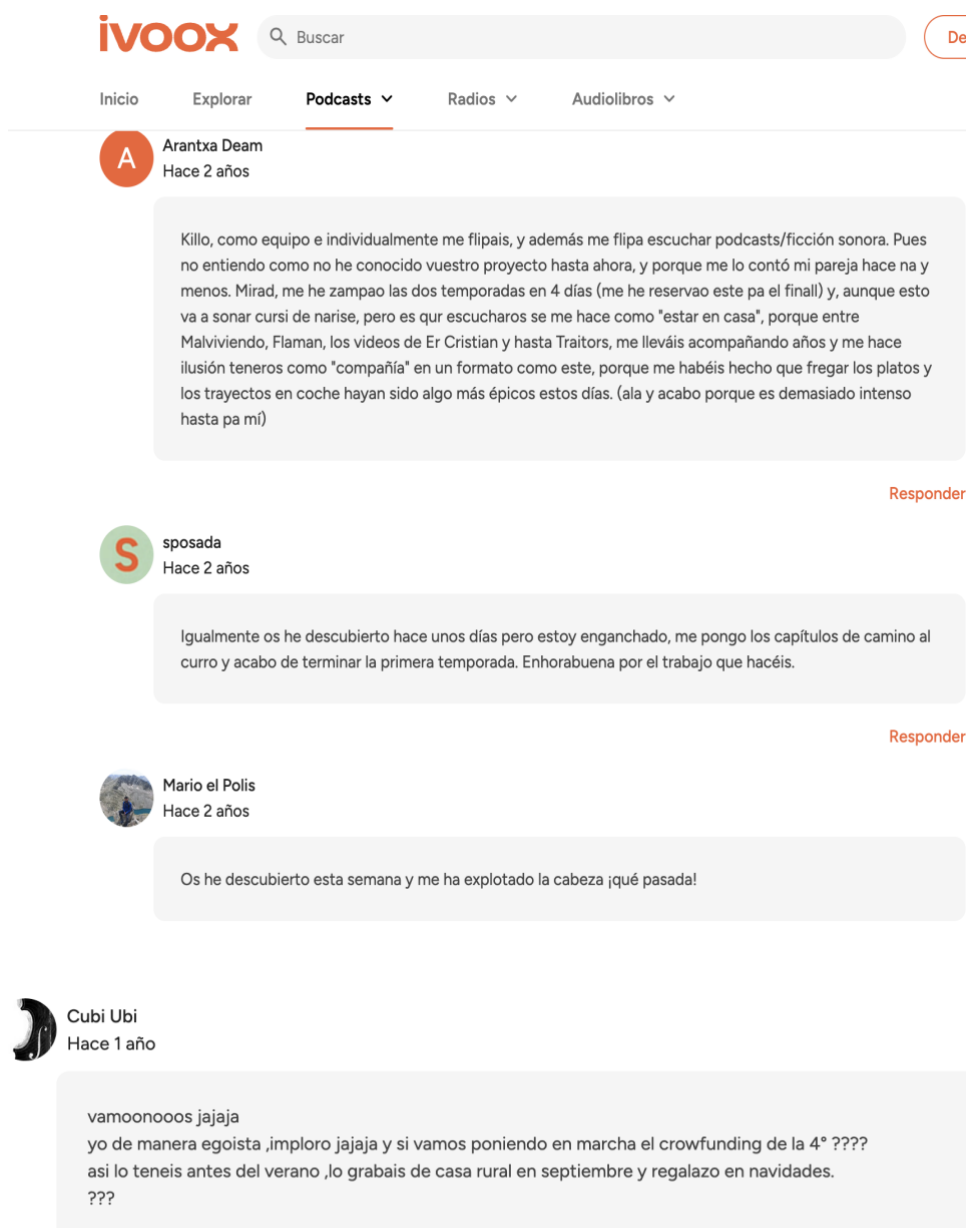
**Figura 4.** Audience comments about the character Jepardo



Source: iVoox

The analysis confirms that the influence of the *fandom* community is substantial, as it plays a pivotal role in the continuity and sustainability of the podcast. The community consistently supports the audio fiction project, acknowledges the creative work of the production team, and maintains an active presence throughout the comment sections of episodes across all seasons. Furthermore, the *fandom* actively contributes to the construction and reinforcement of the narrative universe through recurring references to David Sainz and the team behind the web series *Malviviendo*, thereby evidencing a pre-existing loyalty linked to the creator's broader narrative and creative universe.

**Figure 5.** Supportive comments addressed to the creator and his creative universe

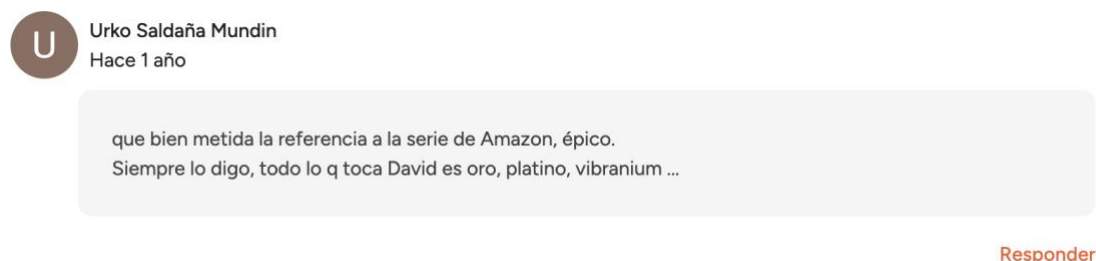


Source: iVoox

Finally, the analysis revealed that Episode 29 incorporates a cross-promotional strategy for Sainz's television series *En Fin*, distributed on Prime Video. In this episode, the character Jepardo asks the protagonists, Kai and Roldi, how they would react to the impact of a meteorite and a hypothetical end of the world, to which Kai responds with the expression "*En fin*" ("Anyway" / "The End"). This narrative device operates as an

intertextual nod to the *fandom* community familiar with the author's broader body of audiovisual work.

**Figure 6.** Fan references to the cross-promotional strategy



Source: iVoox

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that *Un mundo violento* resonates with an adult geek community (aged 40–60), fostering processes of community cohesion and cultural re-signification, in line with Woo's (2012) characterization of adult *fandom* as a form of cultural refuge. Rather than portraying geeks as marginal identities, the series reconfigures them in a positive light, positioning them alternately as heroes, nerds, and *outsiders*, while reinforcing the notion of an “emotional architecture of beautified failure” (Kallifatides, 2025) that is characteristic of immersive audio fiction.

The results also provide a nuanced perspective on previous scholarship concerning *fandom* in podcasting. While Mañas-Pellejero and Paz (2022) emphasize audience participation primarily as a mechanism for interaction and visibility, the case of *Un mundo violento* demonstrates that such participation may also acquire an economic dimension capable of determining the continuity of independent creative projects.

Consistent with Yeates (2018), the case of *Un mundo violento* illustrates how audio fiction facilitates the consolidation of participatory communities that transcend mere consumption of the narrative and become actively involved in its economic and symbolic sustainability. Although no direct influence of the *fandom* on the podcast's creative

decisions was identified, the findings reveal a strong affective bond and a significant degree of community commitment that contribute to the project's continuity.

Furthermore, the high density of intertextual references functions as a shared cultural language that strengthens the narrative while enabling forms of audience appropriation akin to those described by Jenkins (2006) through the concept of textual *poaching*. The success of the *crowdfunding* campaigns confirms the role of patronage as a form of active participation and as an alternative to traditional monetization models. Likewise, *engagement* strategies based on community care and audience involvement contribute to the consolidation of a shared creative universe, thereby reinforcing audience loyalty (Mañas-Pellejero & Paz, 2022). Indeed, community-building practices constitute one of the principal drivers of audience *engagement* in podcasting (López & Monteiro-Homssi, 2021).

Finally, this study addresses a significant gap in the scholarly literature on the audio ecosystem by examining fiction podcasting in close connection with geek culture and *fandom* dynamics, a relationship that has received limited academic attention to date. Moreover, it proposes an analytical framework that can be replicated in the study of other audio fiction projects characterized by active and participatory communities.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the findings confirm that *Un mundo violento* constitutes a prototypical case of audio fiction sustained by a *fandom* community deeply committed to the podcast's narrative universe. The audience plays a central role in both the continuity and expansion of the project.

With regard to character construction, the analysis demonstrates that the protagonists embody archetypes readily recognizable within geek culture while undergoing narrative development that grants them increasing psychological complexity. This evolution fosters processes of audience identification and appropriation. Consequently, the geek figure ceases to occupy a marginal position and is instead transformed into a heroic character endowed with positive narrative values.

In relation to intertextuality and transmedia expansion, the podcast exhibits a high degree of intertextual density sustained throughout its three seasons, with recurring references to cinema, television series, comics, video games, and popular culture, often articulated through ironic and affective readings. These forms of cultural reappropriation simultaneously parody mainstream conventions and construct alternative cultural frameworks. Such references serve a function that extends beyond mere humorous allusion, operating instead as a shared language between creator and audience. This dynamic is fundamental to the podcast's platform-based expansion, which materializes primarily through the iVoox platform, where participation is active, sustained, and affectively driven. Listeners do not merely comment on episodes; they interpret storylines, celebrate narrative twists, express admiration for characters, and collectively reinforce the fictional universe. This participation appears to contribute to the project's continuity and viability, as audience members effectively function as an economic support structure that helps guarantee the production of subsequent seasons. The case therefore illustrates a model of independent audio fiction grounded in trust and shared responsibility between creators and audiences.

The creators deploy narrative strategies specifically designed to strengthen community bonds through proximity and authenticity, openly acknowledging their own membership within geek culture. Direct interaction between creators and audiences through social media facilitates processes of identification and belonging. This horizontal relationship fosters a high degree of both emotional and creative *engagement*.

From an industrial perspective, the findings suggest that the sustainability of certain independent audio fiction projects no longer depends exclusively on major platforms or media conglomerates. The consolidation of highly committed *fandom* communities enables the development of hybrid financing and distribution models supported by audience participation. In this respect, *Un mundo violento* demonstrates how *fandom* can become a strategic asset for independent cultural production within the contemporary podcasting ecosystem.

More broadly, this study offers an original contribution to the fields of communication research and podcast studies by demonstrating how *fandom* may function not only as an interpretive community but also as both an economic and creative agent.

Several limitations should nevertheless be acknowledged. First, this research is based on a single case study, which limits the generalizability of its findings to the broader field of audio fiction. Second, the analysis of the community focuses primarily on comments posted on iVoox and on the interview conducted with the podcast's creator, leaving aside other platforms and additional audience perspectives.

Future research could extend the analysis to other audio fiction projects, compare *fandom* communities across different genres, or examine the impact of generational and gender differences on the reception of such productions. Further studies might also explore audience behavior across multiple digital platforms in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of participatory dynamics within contemporary podcasting cultures.

## 7. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

|                           | Author 1 | Author 2 |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| Conceptualization         | X        | X        |
| Data curation             | X        | X        |
| Formal analysis           | X        | X        |
| Investigation             | X        | X        |
| Methodology               | X        | X        |
| Supervision               | X        | X        |
| Validation                | X        | X        |
| Visualization             | X        | X        |
| Writing-Draft             | X        | X        |
| Writing- Review & editing | X        | X        |

## 8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

## 9. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE STATEMENT

During the writing process, artificial intelligence-assisted tools (Microsoft Copilot) were used exclusively for language editing and translation purposes under human supervision.

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