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Tales about Television. Difficulties in naming a new technology

Relatos sobre la televisión. Problemas para nombrar una nueva tecnología

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The aim of this article is the analysis of news items that appeared between 1924 and 1935 in the newspaper from Jalisco, Mexico, *El Informador* and the weekly magazine *Revista de Revistas*, written media that showed interest for the popularization of television since the mid-1920s. It is intended to show the attempts to name this technology, it is about displaying "the problems of nomination of the device". It is also of interest how this invention was perceived in press notes. Furthermore, it is also analyzed the imaginary uses attributed to this new of communication.
KEYWORDS: Television History, Latin America, Communication Technologies.

El objetivo de este artículo es un análisis de notas periodísticas aparecidas entre 1924 y 1935 en el diario jalisciense El Informador *y el semanario* Revista de Revistas*, medios impresos que mostraron un interés por la popularización de la televisión desde mediados de los años veinte del siglo pasado. Se pretende mostrar los intentos por darle nombre a esa tecnología, se trata de mostrar "los problemas de nominación del aparato". También es de interés ver cómo se percibía ese invento en las notas periodísticas. Además, es objeto de análisis los usos imaginados que se atribuían al futuro medio de comunicación.*
PALABRAS CLAVE: Historia de la televisión, Latinoamérica, tecnologías de la comunicación.

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Communication technologies must go a long way before being accepted by society. To satisfactorily complete laboratory tests and demonstrate that communication technologies work is not enough, they must also promise solutions to social problems in innovative ways. In the same way, the "communication machines"[2] as Flichy (1993) called them, had to find their place in a space formerly inhabited by earlier technologies. Television promoters that emerged simultaneously in different countries from the second decade of the past century had to compete with a well-established mass media system. A robust film industry with highly internationalized consumption and distribution networks, while on the other hand, radio was experiencing a period of expansion throughout the world.

The aim of this article is the analysis of news items that appeared between 1924 and 1935 in the newspaper from Jalisco, Mexico, *El Informador* and the weekly magazine *Revista de Revistas*, written media that showed interest for the popularization of television since the mid-1920s of the past century. The material selection criterion was twofold. On the one hand, *thematic*, meaning that the journalistic notes were those related to the coverage of the television emergence in the world. On the other hand, it was *chronological*, since there are no news published before 1924; and as a limit, 1935 was established because in that year an experimental television system was inaugurated in México. Since this year, the press already had a specific reference when talking about television and it was not only speculative. It is intended to show the attempts to name this technology, or according to Varela (2005), it is about showing "the problems of nomination of the device" (p. 23). It is also of interest to see how this invention was perceived in the news items. Furthermore, the imagined uses that were attributed to the future communication medium are object of analysis. The reflections emerged

[2] They are the machines that were born in the 19th century and that "still continue to be the basis of our communication systems: first the telegraph and then the telephone, photography, the record, the cinema and the radio. Contemporary techniques (satellite TV or mobile phones, for example) cannot be studied if not incorporated into this historical line" (Flichy, 1993, pp. 11-12).

from the study of this particular case, seek to contribute to the television history and to the uses and appropriations of this technology.

Several authors coincide in pointing out that the study of the discourses and narratives that surround and accompany the technologies are fundamental to understand the success or failure of an artifact. Bannister (2001) conceives the television as "a large-scale technological system that encompass technological artifacts, social relationships, business organizations, and government agencies" (p. 1). Therefore, the intellectual challenge is to show how these "social, political and economic factors shaped this new technology" (p. 1).

On the other hand, Flichy (2003) affirms that these discourses should be considered "as a component of the development of a technical system" (p. 12). Flichy is convinced that at the center of innovation we find different types of "violent controversies" (p. 12), which can be reconstructed and recovered in order to understand the social debates that were generated around the role of the communication technologies in social life.

A strategy for the reconstruction of controversies is the analysis of the press, since this communication medium nurtures the imagination of the readers, whether they are specialized or amateur. The news items give an account of technical advances, public exhibitions, failures, scientific controversies and allow people to see the diversity of plans that governments, companies and inventors had in order to incorporate television into everyday life. The press contributes to public understanding of new technologies and, in doing so, it becomes a stage where the best way to use them will be discussed. The press allows us to see who the legitimate interlocutors are, who is the expert and who is excluded from the collective debate.

Moreover, an approach such as the one presented, opens the possibility of observing the stammering attempts to give a name to this new invention that, in the 1920s, did not yet acquire the uniform technical aspect that it has nowadays, neither found its place in the emerging mass society. At that time, the priority of scientists that were experimenting with television was that the possibility of remote viewing was technically feasible. Furthermore, they were not quite sure of what practical use it could have and, much less, what place and social function

would be assigned to this invention because "it was not well known what it could be used for" (Vilches, 1993, p. 17). Scientists and technicians in general "only wanted to send images and sounds at a distance by means of radioelectric waves, saving ever greater distances and obtaining sharper images" (Puyal, 2013, p. 239). This idea of developing television as a scientific achievement without any social implication is also shared by Keilbach and Stauff (2013) who argue that "as is often the case in scientific laboratories, this television experiments were not conducted to solve one well-defined problem" (p. 86), there was no clear object of investigation. Neither was it yet finding its place in the emerging mass society. As Barnouw (1990) points out, there were several naming proposals for "the experiments in the transmission of images" (p. 17). The term "television" proposed by the *Scientific American* magazine in 1907 had to compete with terms such as *visual wireless*, *visual radio*, and *electronic vision*, among others. In Germany, other concepts such as "audio-image receiver", "tele-visio-audio" or "remote cinema room" were used, since the word television was not capable of producing an idea or a concise meaning in people's mindset (Elsner et al., 1990, p. 203). These authors went further and pointed out that, for the German case, television initially had "identity problems", since it was difficult to assign it a role and a function within the media system of the interwar period. In addition, those who promoted the introduction of television "had no idea what to do with this medium" (p. 212).

In Europe, during the interwar period, terms such as *radiotelegraphy*, *radio cinema*, *telecinema*, *televisual telegraphy* and others, were known to the variety of devices for "viewing at a distance" (Zielinsky, 1999, p. 136). On her side, Varela (2005) gives an account of the plentiful presence of stories about television in Argentine periodical publications since the last half of the 1920s of the past century. The assortment of terms used to refer to the television "makes it clear the need to assimilate the new invention to the previous ones with which it would form a *continuum* (photography-film-radio-television), but also the lack of clarity regarding the performance and applications of the invention" (p. 23).

What is valuable about news items is that they account for the affluence of interpretations that television generated in its experimental

stage. The incubation of television, as we know it now, took many years. It grew hand in hand with the technology of its time and was fed by the contributions of a wide spectrum of disciplines "both from the arts and the sciences and, frequently, with little relation between them" (Abramson, 1987, p. 1).

El Informador

This newspaper was launched in Guadalajara, Mexico, on October 5th, 1917. According to Larrosa (2018) *El Informador* started as a project of several citizens who had in mind to launch a newspaper that could offer information in a context in which movements as relevant as the Mexican Revolution and World War I were developing.

Jesús Álvarez del Castillo, founder of the newspaper, partnered with other investors, including merchants and industrialists from the French settlement in Guadalajara. When World War I ended, the French decedents investors withdrew from the project and Jesús Álvarez del Castillo bought all the shares of *El Informador*. Starting in 1919, the newspaper became a family business of the Álvarez del Castillo.

During its first two decades of circulation, the newspaper began to prosper and prevail over other journals. However, in the late 1930s, *El Informador* had a political problem that led to a strike by its workers, which caused the newspaper to declare bankruptcy and close its presses between 1937 and 1938. With the help of its employees and with the support of the *Asociación de Editores de los Estados* (Association of Editors of the States), *El Informador* was able to be published and began to circulate again in December, 1938. Fregoso and Sánchez-Ruiz (1993) determine that, through the years, *El Informador* consolidated itself as a conservative newspaper, in the "strict sense of not supporting too much the innovations, neither political nor journalistic" (p. 29). After 1945 it was consolidated as the most widely read newspaper in Guadalajara. *El Informador* has a digital newspaper archive, where it is possible to retrieve all the editions of the newspaper through a search engine, free of charge. This resource was very useful for the development of this research.

The tone of the analyzed items is utopian and, therefore, very useful for studying the experimental period of television. To pay attention to fantasies, as suggested by Marvin (1988), helps us determine "what 'consciousness' was in a particular age, what thoughts were possible, and what thoughts could not be entertained yet or any more" (p. 7). For his part, Latour (2012) is very clear in arguing that if one wants to understand sciences and technicalities, it is necessary to start "from those great waves of more or less disjointed, more or less ordered statements" (p. 76) that come down to us; since the narratives "march ahead of social practices in order to open the way" (Certeau, in Flichy, 2003, p. 269).

The first news item in which the *television* neologism appears was published in *El Informador* on February 12th, 1924. It is important to analyze the mentioned item for many reasons. Worldwide experimentation surrounding television was carried out in laboratories, with scientific purposes and under the guide of two technological frameworks: the *mechanical system* patented in 1884 by Paul Nipkow and later improved by several scientists; and the *electronic system* developed simultaneously by numerous research teams from the 1920s of the past century. The news was titled "The television" and it describes the progress in the experimentation of this technology in France, taking as a source of information the experiments of the scientist Edouard Belin.[3]

> The word television etymologically means vision at a great distance... The problem of television consists in making shows that take place at any distance visible to an observer. Many researchers have tried to solve it by using electricity as an intermediary... M. E. Belin, to whom we owe

[3] Edouard Belin (1876-1963) experimented with the transmission of still images by cable and by radio waves. Over time, he shifted his interests toward experimenting with television. In December, 1922 Belin demonstrated at the Sorbonne a device that was capable of encoding a wide range of flashes of light and converting them into radio waves. Belin argued that if it was possible to transmit, receive and reproduce a point of light, then the same could be done with millions of points of light (Abramson, 1987).

> wonderful achievements of remote image transmission, has stated in a recent conference at the Astronomical Society of France... M. E. Belin has already been able to transmit wirelessly, and reconstitute upon arrival, the variations of flashes of a light source made up of a point. It is a first step. The electrical wire or the Hertzian waves have already suppressed the distance for the word; soon such a thing will happen for the sight (*El Informador*, February 12th, 1924, p. 3).

That same year, *El Informador* published that "Mr. L. Baird, British engineer" had display in his country "a cinematography session transmitting by a wireless telegraphy". The article added that those attending the event had given a "very favorable judgement to the new invention. It seems, in fact, that the reproduction of the images is absolutely perfect and not even the smallest detail is lost in transmission" (*El Informador,* May 13th, 1924, p. 3). The note surprises because of its newsworthy, since only a year before, this Scottish engineer patented "a transmission system by telegraphy or sight, portraits and scenes radiotelegraph". This system, based on Nipkow's technological proposal, could only transmit silhouettes of objects such as letters and symbols, achieving "very rough and imperfect" images (Burns, 2000, p. 75). Either way, John Lodgie Baird (1888-1946) represented the avant-garde of television research in Great Britain and he did it independently of the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).

The same note gave an account of Francis Jenkins' progress in the United States and reported that he had invented "a device for projecting cinematographic films at distance, by radiotelegraphy" (*El Informador*, May 13th, 1924, p. 3). In fact, independent inventor Charles Francis Jenkins, proposed creating a company that would be able to transmit movies via cable. But with the advent of radio, he changed his mind and thought that the best method for distributing film material would be through electromagnetic waves. In order to materialize his ideas, in 1921 he founded Jenkins Television Laboratories, that sought to produce and develop "radio-movies and transmit them over the air as home entertainment" (Magoun, 2007, p. 30). The following year, he successfully demonstrated the transmission of photographs through electromagnetic waves.

In 1925, a third article titled "Watching by radio is now possible, according to an inventor" also published in *El Informador*, disclose a future demonstration of a television prototype by John Lodgie Baird. After a brief description of the operation of the device, it points out that the inventor has predicted that "over time, the machine can be adapted to the radiotelegraphy devices, making possible that, while talking to a person by radio to Moscow, Tokyo or New York, the image of the person can clearly be 'seen'" (*El Informador*, 1925, p. 14). As a matter of fact, John L. Baird was dedicated full time to television development due to a private funding. In 1925 he managed to transmit and receive images from one room to another with an appreciation of "details and graduations of light and shadow, and not just a black and white spot" (Burns, 2000, p. 85). Months later, Baird offered a public demonstration of his invention to 40 members of the Royal Institution in London. According to Burns (2000) investigation, during 1926, newspapers such as *The Times*, *The New York Times* and *Nature* described and reported on Baird's invention and considered it the first transmission of halftone images. In 1927, he was able to send images from Glasgow to London –700 kilometers away– through the telephone network cable (Williams, 1987, pp. 461-462). It is true that the images were still rudimentary, since they were composed of only 30 lines that were repeated ten times per second. In this experimental framework of long-distance image transmissions, *El Informador* reported the "transatlantic and radiographic transmission" that Baird and his team carried out in February 1928. The experiment consisted of transmitting images and audio simultaneously from a ship at sea, the ship was heading from London towards New York, here is the version of the Jalisco newspaper:

> The transatlantic and radiographic television were first established last night by instruments invented by John L. Baird.
>
> The success is only partial, and it is doubted if friends on this side of the Atlantic, of those who were in front of the television in London, could really recognize them by the image received in the United States, but they showed extraordinary progress on other radiographic points.
>
> Three images were transmitted: the first was the image of a ventriloquist. The second was that of an individual named Fox, an employee of the "Associated

> Press" in London. The third was the wife of Jaime Howe, a member of the "Associated Press" in London.
> The image appeared rotating on metal [Nipkow discs] and often faded due to static interruptions. The movements were easily appreciated when the image of the woman was transmitted, such as the opening of the mouth. This event is considered very significant here, where radiographic television of movable objects progresses rapidly (*El Informador*, February 10th, 1928, p. 2).

If we consider that *El Informador* is a generalist newspaper and not specialized in technical matters, it is possible to affirm that the coverage of John Lodgie Baird's work was adequate and, therefore, it allows to show the difficulties of naming the technology that then was new and that now we call television. Terms such as "cinematography transmitted by wireless telegraphy", "radiophone" and "transatlantic and radiographic television" appear.

The following article is a review of a conference given by Edouard Belin at the French Society of Photography in early-1926, where statements by the French scientist about the future of television are collected:

> Belin estimates that the television problem would be solved within a few weeks and that before 1926 ends, the orator speaking into a microphone will simultaneously have his voice and his image transmitted and collected across the globe. The wise Frenchman also believes that the remote cinematographer will be a natural consequence of television. When the devices are perfected, what today seems chimerical will be the simplest thing in the world (*El Informador*, February 21st, 1926, p. 7).

In June, 1927, the article titled "Radio-Vision" is published, in which it is reported that, according to Unites States specialized magazines, the television would be available to the public in "about two or three years at the most"; using a stammering tone to refer to it –as "television or distance viewing"– and speculates about the future uses of television:

> The transmission by radio, meaning, wireless, of vision, ergo television or distance vision, seems to be already a fact... it is prophesied that soon it will be possible to see, for example, a football match at more than a thousand kilometers away... and the most remarkable thing about this invention is that the receiving device –which must be the complement of the Radiotelephony one, is neither bulky nor complicated to handle... the newspapers will be able, without sending their photographic reporters to the place of any event: sports game, theatrical function, etc., to reproduce the most interesting moments to satisfy the curiosity of its readers (*El Informador*, June 18th, 1927, p. 3).

It should be mention that, from the middle of that year, the items related to the television advances in Great Britain began to decrease and, in inverse proportion, the stories of innovations made by American companies became more frequent. As is the case of the news that appeared in the April 17th edition, that informs about the progress of the AT&T Company in the television field. AT&T began an ambitious research program in order to achieve a reliable television system. For this purpose, a group of eminent scientists were hired and a generous budget was assigned, besides having access to the facilities of the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York City. The first result "out of the 200 engineers and scientists and around $300 000 invested" was gotten in 1925 with the design and operation of a system capable of sending images through a telephone line (Van Den Ende, 1997/1998, p. 19). A year later, a telephone conversation with a screen on each side was achieved, and it was possible to see the faces of the interlocutors. The referenced item is the review of a public demonstration of this videophone system by the President of AT&T at its headquarters in New York and the US Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, from his office in Washington.

The advances of the Westinghouse company were also reviewed by *El Informador*. The article titled "Remote sound film transmission" reported on the work carried out by Frank Conrad, a prominent scientist, telecommunications expert and hired to lead the team to develop a reliable television system for that company. The title of the piece openly suggests a practical use for this new invention: watching movies.

> ... with the slow but sure improvement of television we are about to witness the triumph of a new scientific prodigy, applied to the art of popular entertainment: Radiographic film... the production of films by Radio, this is still in the Laboratory stage, but recently experiments that can be described as fortunate had been carried out... the production of films through ethereal waves requires a series of extremely complicated devices, but the principles on which it is based are easily understood by the lover of scientific experiments. It results on a combination of photographic and sound reproduction (*El Informador*, April 13th, 1929, pp. 2, 6).

The item published with the title "The Westinghouse discovers a new type of television" is of utmost importance for this investigation since it mentions Vladimir Zworykin for the first time, a key figure in the development of television in the United States. In addition, it describes the "new type" of television that is none other than the use of a cathode ray tube as a screen, instead of forming the image through Nipkow discs. It is true that it is not yet a fully electronic system, since mechanical components such as "vibrating mirrors" and a "film" are mentioned, but it is a precedent of the method that Zworykin patented in 1935 under the RCA auspice.

> The application of a cathode ray tube in the receiving device gives it many advantages over the visual broadcasting method of today, which consists of a mechanism that makes use of a scrutinizing disk that is well known to all... Using this method, it will be possible for an entire audience to receive the important events on television, as soon as the film containing the impression of them is developed. It is also to be said that such transmissions may be accompanied by the corresponding sounds, duly synchronized (*El Informador*, January 13th, 1930, p. 2).

A couple of news items published on *El Informador* deserve to be mentioned as they refer to the statements made by Guglielmo Marconi, a scientist who was awarded in 1902 with the Nobel Prize in Physics and also a consummate businessman. Despite the experimental stage in which television was in 1929, he had the lucidity to foresee the relationship that would be established between cinematography and

distance vision: "the cinematographer will survive, despite television, for the same reason that today the phonograph and radiography are combined. They are two different forms that complement each other, one producing and the other preserving" (*El Informador*, November 10th, 1929, p. 8). A year and a half later he expanded that argument:

> I don't think television will eliminate the film. The relationship between television and the cinematograph will be the same as the one that exists between the radio and the phonograph... Many people love to listen and watch music and they will continue to visit the cinema, as well as others prefer to listen to the records that they like best through the phonograph, that the radio has not been able to master in any way (*El Informador*, April 28th, 1931, p. 8).

Revista de Revistas

This weekly magazine was founded in November, 1910, and was a revolutionary publication in Mexico, in both the editorial and the national politics scope. In the editorial field, *Revista de Revistas*, whose original motto was "The most complete, varied and interesting weekly magazine in the Republic", modified the presentation of the news, amalgamated the information with commercial advertising, broadened the information spectrum and promoted the cartoon as a vehicle for criticism. It is important to mention that the response it received from the readers in Mexico was so great that, based on it, the *Excelsior* newspaper was created in March, 1917. It was the only weekly publication that went from the Porfiriato to the governments emanating from the Mexican Revolution over six decades, therefore, the magazine was able to witness and narrate the whole revolutionary process, the two world wars and the 1968 student movement. Its content sought to embrace all preferences: sports, theater, ladies (beauty and health advices, cookbooks, and also fashion), social notes (marriages, medical or bachelor's degrees), bibliographic section (reviews, literary critiques, recommendations), news, competitions, riddles and other curiosities. This was the way that led to the "Literature and Art" section, let's say, the main course of *Revista de Revistas*, where the

most representative writers of the time were placed. The magazine disappeared in November, 2005 (Gutiérrez, 2019; Pereira, 2004). For the preparation of this paper, the *Fondo Histórico de la Biblioteca Pública del Estado de Jalisco* (Historical Fund of the Public Library of the State of Jalisco "Juan José Arreola") was consulted. Assortment that protects the collection of *Revista de Revistas*.

The first article published by this weekly magazine was titled "Traveling through the Ether: The Radiovision" and appeared in the edition of July 13th, 1930 under the signature of Pelayo Vizuete. It is a clear example of the difficulties in naming a new technology. The text says:

> … we must go marking boundaries and giving names to the fields in order to avoid confusion. The "distance sight" is **television**; but this includes **telephotography**, transmission of portraits and drawings; the **telecinematography**, distant reproduction of cinematographic films, and radiovision, sending images taken from life (Vizuete, 1930, p. 25, original bold).

The explanation becomes complicated when he describes the following components: "**Television** is the device that reproduces (sees) objects at a distance; The **radiovisor** is the one that gives them, that sees the images of natural objects from a distance, that reproduces them **directly**" (Vizuete, 1930, p. 25, original bold). Subsequently he describes the operation, and from the characteristics mentioned by the author, it is concluded that he refers to the mechanical television system.

The second article about television was published on August 16th, 1931, and was written by Kalman Tihany, a Hungarian scientist who, in 1926, applied for a patent for his invention called *radioskop*; this request was not accepted due to bureaucratic issues, but 75 years later (in 2001) it was included in UNESCO's *Memory of the World.* Then, between 1928 and 1929, he applied for several patents for all his ideas on electronic television cameras in Germany, Belgium, United States, France, Great Britain and Hungary, most of his applications in Europe were not accepted. Although there is no evidence that such system

"had ever worked" (Abramson, 2003, p. 119), it was important for the design of the Zworykin iconoscope. In the article, Tihany criticizes the mechanical disc system that, in those years, dominated television experimentation, referring to it as "a toy" capable of reproducing a photograph, but far from reaching the quality of cinematography:

> The [mechanical] television suffers from certain very serious defects... the transmitted image is confused, crossed by dark lines, and what is even worse, animated by a rapid and continuous vibration determined by the imperfect synchronization, which impairs the view of the observer (Tihany, 1931, p. 15).

It is true that Tihany recognized the contributions of Baird and the other scientists who followed the Nipkow method, but, in his view, this method had no future. For Tihany the advancement of television rested on the cathode ray electronic television. "These rays... reproduce the images without distorting them; with the help of my invention... they are obtained with evident clarity and cleanliness" (p. 18). Finally, the Hungarian engineer developed, between 1938 and 1939, patents for an electronic television system "but they were not assigned to Tihany, but to RCA" (Santillán Zeron, 2017).

In October, 1932, the third article was published in *Revista de Revistas* and was signed by Marc Chauvieres. Here, the author defines television as "art –or science– that allows images of animated beings or objects to be transmitted at a distance". The author adds that "a particular form of television is tele-cinema, which consists of transmitting and reproducing a cinema film at a distance". He expresses the technical difficulties faced by the new invention, but that will be solved "within a few years, if not in a few months". When this happens "then we will really have the cinema in our own home. On the family screen we will see either box or tennis matches" (Chauvieres, 1932, pp. 13-14).

The fourth article is "The development of radio broadcasting in Germany, in the last year and a half"; It was published without signature on February 17th, 1935 and its content, loaded with propaganda intentions, narrates the "surprising" technological progress in radio transmission and television, developed by German National Socialism,

thanks to the close collaboration between Telefunken and the Reich Post and Telegraph Administration:

> In the field of television, which practical realization is eagerly awaited in all parts of the world, surprising results have recently been obtained in Germany.
> Working closely with the industry led by Telefunken, the Reich Post and Telegraph Administration has recently set up... a complete facility for testing purposes... For some time now, sound film transmissions have been carried out on a daily basis exclusively for practical testing of the various TV receivers developed by the German industry. These transmissions are used to examine the general reception and range conditions. Soon the German television industry will launch various types of amateur receivers on the market that will surely help to support the efforts made in this field to find the definitive solution (*Revista de Revistas*, February 17th, 1935, p. 10).

The fifth article, of July, 1935, was titled "The Television" and its author Pierre Devaux gives an account of the broadcasts that were carried out at that time in both London and Paris. He finished the article with an interesting reflection:

> Applied science advances with unimaginable speed. In a few years we have seen the piano disappear against the phonograph, then we saw the phonograph disappear against the radio; the theater has been half-eaten by the cinematograph, and now the cinema, at the same time, pales before radio vision. It is truly difficult to imagine what will be of the pleasures and spectacles in the world of tomorrow (Devaux, 1935, n.p.).

Conclusions

In this selection of news items, it is possible to appreciate how inventors, businessmen and corporations try to explain to the general public what a specific new technology is, how it works and what it is for. The task does not result to be easy for the promoters, it is necessary to name it, give it a proper name in order to distinguish it from the

competing technologies. In addition, no matter how new a technology is, it must always have a point of comparison with the old technologies that preceded it.

In the case of television, this task becomes difficult because its emergence and development occurred simultaneously in different countries, with diverse scientific and cultural traditions that generated multiple naming proposals. The press' babbling when naming television is notable, it used names such as *distance vision*, *cinematography transmitted by wireless telegraphy*, *radiophony*, as well as *transatlantic and radiographic television*, to name a few. In this process of narrating the story of television, the press causes expectations in future audiences.

At the same time, the analyzed news material shows the approach and resolution of technical controversies and, through this exercise, it is possible to reconstruct the processes of appropriation and social uses of technology. Both, *El Informador* and *Revista de Revistas* clearly show the interpretive diversity that the promoters intended for television. The analyzed notes give an account for how Belin and Baird sought to make "seeing at a distance" as far away and with greater clarity as possible, more like a technological scientific challenge and without any particular interest in what type of material to exhibit. Instead, the Westinghouse company, as well as the inventor Jenkins, were clear that television would be a source of entertainment for homes, mainly with movies.

On the other hand, AT&T developed television not as a means of mass communication but as a strategy to link two points, in the same way that radio began, as a link between a ship and the port. AT&T was looking for telephones with a screen that would allow both hearing the voice and perceiving the image of the interlocutors. In addition, the company insisted on using the telephone network as a means of distribution for the television signal. True to the company's business line, the engineers developed a videophone. The RCA, with an accumulated experience as the owner of radio stations and with a virtual monopoly on patents in the field of radio transmissions, opted for entertainment (sports, shows and movies). Besides, RCA was the great promoter of completely electronic television.

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