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FACULTY OF PERFORMANCE, VISUAL ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

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Convergence, Engagement & Power

Proceedings of the 6th Annual PhD Conference at the Institute of Communications Studies

Edited by
Christiaan De Beukelaer
Kruakae Pothong
Caitlin Schindler
Toussaint Nothias
Stuart Shaw
Nur Abd. Karim
Patrick Enaholo
John Macwillie
Cristina Miguel

Introduction

New technologies are playing critical roles in the emergence, sustenance, and viability of populist upheavals against autocratic and despotic authorities and institutions. Focusing on the role of technology, these events are visibly mediated by popular social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and blogs. These new forms of social media permeate every aspect of everyday life, revivifying the possibility of a more democratic discourse. Yet, the innovation of these technologies originates in a global hegemonic system, which retains their ultimate ownership in and through existing mass media and telecommunications conglomerates. Amidst this hybridity, a multifaceted and multilayered convergence is influencing the ways old and new media are produced. In response to the convergence of technology and culture forms, and its consequences, this conference posed the question: to what extent are engagements with convergent media challenging or influencing hegemonies in the digital age?

In the light of these technological, cultural, social and political events, The Institute of Communications Studies (ICS), University of Leeds, welcomed outstanding presenters from throughout the UK and abroad to provide excellent and inspiring contributions to academic research at its 6th Annual PhD conference in May 2012. The conference received a multitude of paper proposals as a result of which we were able to accept only half of the submissions. All abstracts have gone through blind peer review for quality, relevance, and potential.

With the aim to foster debate among graduate students, along with keynote addresses and practical workshops, this rigorous international academic event has become a tradition at the University of Leeds since its inaugural edition in 2007. In 2012, first-year PhD students: Caitlin Schindler, Kruakae Pothong, Toussaint Nothias, Stuart Shaw, Nur Abd. Karim, Patrick Enaholo, John Macwillie, and Cristina Miguel took up the challenge of organising the event. Throughout the process, we received ample support from academic and technical staff at the department. A special word of thanks for Simon Popple and Andrew Thorpe is appropriate.

The conference enjoyed inspiring contributions from excellent keynote speakers, Natalie Fenton (Goldsmiths, University of London) and Stephen Coleman (ICS, University of Leeds). The panel chairs, Simon Popple, Paul Taylor, Gary Rawnsley, and Sylvia Harvey, diligently facilitated the debate around the excellent paper presentations. Last but not least, the closing remarks by David Hesmondhalgh, head of department, eloquently summed up key elements of the debates throughout the day.

It is thus a great pleasure that six presenters hereby share their work in print.

Thank you once again to all presenters, keynote speakers, panel chairs, the entire Institute of Communications Studies for their presence and support and the entire conference organisation committee.

Christiaan De Beukelaer
Conference Chair

Welcome

Each year, a group of postgraduate research students, here at the Institute of Communications Studies at the University of Leeds, organise a conference. The theme is chosen by them. They carry out pretty much all the practical arrangements. Members of academic staff simply make themselves available to give advice. The students tell us that they learn a great deal in the process. The conference also adds considerably to the research culture of the Institute.

We're very proud of the work done by our terrific research students, and it's a great pleasure to introduce this collection of work from the 2012 conference.

David Hesmondhalgh

Head of the Institute of Communications Studies

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Art-activism & Technology: Re-examining the 'neutrality of machines' under neoliberalism

Danielle Child

University of Leeds and Manchester Metropolitan University. Email: d.child@mmu.ac.uk.

Within Italian Autonomist thought, the role of technology in the capitalist workplace is considered to be one of oppression. In his 'Fragment on Machines', Karl Marx warned that the social brain would become inherently tied to the production process and 'crystallised in machinery' under capitalism. This notion has been taken up by Italian Autonomist thinkers such as Raniero Panzieri, who proposes that the use of technology has increasingly facilitated capital's control of the worker in each stage of capitalism's development since the cooperative phase. With the advent of 'immaterial labour', Panzieri further argues that informational techniques tend to 'restore the charm of work' under late capitalism. Machinery under capitalism is thus inherently tied to the class-based divisions within society. However, new informational technologies mask the oppressive role that machinery has traditionally held. How, therefore, can we understand these new technologies within neoliberalism when the work tool comes into our homes and everyday lives – namely, the internet, the PC and the mobile phone? Do the social and the work brain become one and the same? And what are the alternative possibilities?

Since the incarnation of neoliberalism, there has been a proliferation of art-activist practices associated with the contemporary art world. Communication technologies are often central to the work of the art-activists, exemplified in practices such as 'electronic civil disobedience', 'identity correction' through to 'tactical media' and 'hacktivism'. This paper examines the work of the art-activists who utilise informational technologies (and tropes associated with these, such as the network) in their quest to critique capital. How can we understand the use of these technologies for anti-capitalist activity in relation to the apparently inescapable capitalist nature of technologies used for work under neoliberalism? Do these practices, in fact, demonstrate an alternative (and even radical) potential for new technologies, severing the oppressive ties with capitalism?

The aim of this paper is twofold: It is important, firstly, to clarify the terms used in this paper, particularly that of 'art-activism'. Secondly, I wish to examine the role that capitalist technologies have for practices counter to capitalism in relation to Marxist claims that capitalist technology cannot be politically neutral. For the purpose of this analysis, 'technology', unless otherwise stated, refers to recent communications technology that can be used in the workplace; that is, mobile phones, PCs, Macs, laptops, iPads, tablets and, of course, the Internet. 'Art-activism' is a more complex term and the explanation to follow is by no means a definitive definition. There is still much work to be undertaken on the subject; hence this analysis, which is intended to be a small step in the right direction. In this paper, 'art-activism' refers to a recent artistic practice, albeit one with a long history, that engages social or political action within a loose artistic framework. 'Loose' because this framework is not the same as that of the 'art institution' – the practices discussed here are not always comfortably accepted by the 'art world'. Some of these practices cross legal boundaries, alongside those of 'art', 'politics' and 'everyday life'. Art-activist works have, however, gained an increased visibility within discourse on contemporary art – particularly in writings on the newly termed 'socially-engaged practice' – and also at contemporary art biennials and prominent international exhibitions, such as *Documenta*.[1] Sometimes art-activist practitioners call themselves 'artists' and sometimes they call themselves 'activists'. Some groups – such as Taller Popular de Serigrafía – will exhibit as artists and as activists, depending on the venue or the invitation.[2] Perhaps you are

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[1] When the 7th Berlin Biennial opened in 2012, under the curatorship of Artur Żmijewski – an artist interested in social activism, it received criticism for the socially-engaged direction of included work.

[2] The Buenos-Aries based group was invited to the Venice Biennale in 2003 as an activist group and to the World Social Forum in the following year as a group of artists. Taller Popular de Serigrafía translates as the Popular Workshop for Silkscreen; it offers access to print workshops to facilitate the

already beginning to see why there is much work to be done. The dual nature of the art-activists' practice (as art or not-art) is precisely why this work is attractive, whilst at the same time complex – it escapes a solid definition and, perhaps more pertinently, it is very difficult to commodify (although, in some cases, not impossible). The activist groups fall into a number of categories. For example, there are those who are overtly political in their ambition, such as those groups involved with the anti-globalisation movements (Reclaim the Streets); 'haktivism', which is a form of Internet-based activism; more subversive groups (etoy [sic]); 'craftivism' (Anarchist Knitting Mob); 'tactical media' (exemplified in the work of the Yes Men) and those who fall under the idiom 'social work' (Superflex).

This paper focuses upon specific art-activist practices that use informational technology for anti-capitalist critique. These uses make take the form of haktivism, internet presence or for organisational/informational purposes associated with protest. I will use the example of etoy's Toy War in this paper to demonstrate the success of practices of this nature against capitalism. The origin of my consideration of art-activist practices has its roots in an argument from an essay that was written in the 1960s by Raniero Panzieri, an Italian Marxist militant associated with the establishment of Workerism.[3] Whilst Panzieri's essay, titled 'The Capitalist Use of Machinery: Marx Versus the Objectivists' (1964), is grounded in an earlier period of capitalism, I consider the implications of his argument for the neoliberal phase of capitalism. In doing so, I question how useful it is for us to consider the role of technology as being inherently tied to capitalist process within the contemporary period. Despite the distinction between the 'technology' discussed in Panzieri's essay (that of large-scale industry) and the technology to be discussed in this analysis (communication technologies), Panzieri, after Marx, acknowledges the relationship between labour and technology employed by capital. This relationship needs to be revisited in order to question and understand the role that technology plays in the work of art-activism.

In 'The Capitalist Use of Machinery', Panzieri proposes that the use of technology in the factory is not neutral. That is, the technology is tied to the capitalist process and the power held by capital, rather than simply being a tool to assist work. With the move from manufacture to large-scale industry, the worker becomes more fragmented – the skill that he once owned has now become the skill of the machine. At the same time, Panzieri argues that the capitalist power, which is harnessed through the increase of large-scale machinery, also relies upon the social organisation of labour that was estab-

lished within the cooperative phase. The alignment of the social organisation of labour and the introduction of the machine, he argues, is specific to the capitalist mode of production. With the introduction of large-scale machines, however, the worker becomes fragmented and alienated from his work. In order to counter worker protests stemming from a dissatisfaction with work, the capitalist adopts techniques of 'information' which, Panzieri argues, manipulates working-class attitudes and that: 'restore that "charm" (satisfaction) of work of which the Communist Manifesto already spoke.'[4] (1964 n.p.) In short, the introduction of machinery increases the control of the worker by making the machine the *subject* of work. Once the worker becomes alienated from his labour and the object of production, the capitalist-factory owner establishes new management techniques that appear to restore the charm of work, whilst increasing the flow of capital. The worker, in this equation, is deskilled but the deskilling is masked by the 'charm' of informational techniques.

We witness this type of relationship between worker and technology within the neoliberal period. How many of us who travel on public transport or, when away from the office, are still able to pick up and respond to emails and work-related phonecalls? The only difference now is that the machine is displaced from the factory so that we are even more so tied to work – with the promise of mobility and flexibility. The charm is now found in the appeal of flexibility. One can now work from home with a laptop – fantastic! The barrier between office work and life is broken. Capital now penetrates the non-work space and, at the same time, convinces us that this is to our own benefit. Is it possible to overcome the capitalist nature of these technologies and the associated mystification of its control?

I have argued elsewhere that art-activists adopt neoliberal working traits (Child 2011). Simply put, the art-activists engaged in technological practices – i.e. haktivism, the organisation of protests and electronic civil disobedience – have a symbiotic relationship to neoliberal capitalism through their adoption of the newer communication technologies and, above all, the Internet. The (Western) capitalist workplace is now dominated by the personal computer (this includes manufacturing with CAD and robotic automobile production). The dominant work model – which has shifted from the factory to the office - is made up of networks and projects that are fostered within an environment of temporality and precariousness. We have witnessed in Britain alone a shift from an economy based on manufacture to one centred on the service industries, in which the manufacture of goods is contracted to low-paid workers in other countries as a result of cost-cutting and the extraction of surplus value. The displacement of traditional hand skills to information skills within neoliberalism has been clearly documented.

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production of banners and materials for protests (originating from the protest movement following the Argentinian economic collapse in 2001).

[3] Panzieri is often referred to as a contributor to the founding of Italian Operaismo because of the role that his journal – Quanderni Rossi - had in bringing together the protagonists of the movement.

[4] These techniques of information, according to Panzieri, are techniques of integration, human relations, communications etc.

Artists are no exception to this kind of skill displacement; the visibility of social practices in art over the past ten years is testament to this shift.

Anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation activism utilise the tools of capitalism in order to critique it. However, this use is problematic; David Harvey ultimately argues that the use of capitalist technologies is detrimental to the implementation of an 'other' to capitalism (2010 p.219). Harvey regards the failure of past attempts at communism to be because of the continued use of capitalist technologies which, he argues, need replacing after the initial revolutionary stages.[5] Harvey claims, taking his cue from Marx's discussion of machinery in the first book of *Capital*, that technology is not neutral and further proposes that there is a 'problematic class character of capitalist technologies' (2010 p.219). This proposition is in keeping with Panzieri's argument that the role of technology within capitalism is oppressive. Panzieri argues that the use of technology increasingly facilitates capital's control of the worker in each stage of capitalism's development from cooperation, through manufacture and large-scale industry. In the latter stage, work appears more satisfactory to the worker than in previous periods. The control that capital exerts over him is mystified because the worker *appears* to be content. Panzieri's thesis anticipates the relationship of workers to their work fostered in the neoliberal period, which he did not witness in his lifetime. In some ways, one could consider the informationalisation of work to be a kind of reskilling - not with manual skills, but rather, with knowledge-based skills - thus, the worker becomes more satisfied with work because the worker is acquiring knowledge.

Consequently, the utilisation of capitalist tools and machinery encourages relations in which technology is viewed as competition with the worker, rather than an aid. Marx stated that technology was a powerful tool in suppressing strikes calling machines 'weapons against class revolt' (1990 p.563). Harvey builds on this idea to describe the social nature of technology. He proposes that capitalist technology can be utilised for revolution but, in order for a non-capitalist state to succeed, the technologies have to be replaced alongside the establishment of a new state. If the existing capitalist technologies were to be implemented in a newly emergent non-capitalist state, the social conditions of capitalism would be replicated, rather than abolished, through the continued use of technologies that are not socially neutral. Similarly, Panzieri states:

The relationship of revolutionary action to technological "rationality" is to "comprehend" it, but not in order to acknowledge and exalt it, rather in order to subject it to a new use: to the socialist use of machines. (1964 n.p.)

Panzieri argues that we need to understand technology in order to use it against capital. How can we understand the socialist or, rather, the non- or anti-capitalist use of machines within art-activist practices?

In contrast to Harvey, Panzieri states that a change in 'use' is necessary through comprehension. This comprehension can be understood in terms of the assimilation of *general intellect* and *work* that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri called for in their publications *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude* (2005). This idea is furthered by Paolo Virno's call for the marrying of *intellect* and *action* in his essay 'Virtuosity and Revolution' (1996). The common thread between these writers, who view the shift to immaterial labour as a positive step towards anti-capitalist activity, is the *potential* of 'affective labour'. Affective labour is described by Hardt and Negri as: '…labour that produces or manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion.' (2005 p.108). They also claim that: 'A worker with a good attitude and social skills is another way of saying a worker adept at affective labour.' (2005 p.108). Affective labour crosses a number of roles from care workers to flight attendants, fast food workers and those in the entertainment and culture industries. In *Empire*, labour associated with informational technologies is considered to be one aspect of 'immaterial labour' to which 'affective labour' also belongs. Hardt and Negri later drop this aspect in *Multitude*.

Hardt and Negri identify the potential for a kind of action against capitalism, which lies in the subjective turn that they believe labour has taken under neoliberalism. In his article 'Affective labour', Hardt writes:

Saying that capital has incorporated and exalted affective labour and that affective labour is one of the highest value-producing forms of labour from the point of view of capital does not mean that, thus contaminated, it is no longer of use to anticapitalist projects. On the contrary, given the role of affective labour as one of the strongest links in the chain of capitalist postmodernisation, its potential for subversion and autonomous constitution is all the greater. (1999 p.90)

Hardt states that the potential for this subversion lies in the subjective nature of affective labour - 'labour in the bodily mode' - which, he argues, is collective because it requires the presence of others (1999 p.96).

Hardt claims that affective labour produces: 'social networks, forms of community, biopower.' (1999 p.96). Hardt identifies 'biopower' as: '...the production of collective subjectivities, sociality, and society itself.' (1999 p.98). The potential therefore lies in the communicative nature of a kind of labour that produces 'socialities' and 'collective subjectivities.' (1999 p.96).[6] We recall that

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[5] Vladimir Lenin adopted aspects of Taylorist methods in Soviet Russian production after the Bolshevik Revolution; he believed that only once the Taylorist methods were freed from working for capital, could they be employed to realise their full productive potential. (Lenin 1972 pp.152-154).

[6] The identification of the potential to affect political change is redolent of the Italian Workerist and Autonomia traditions of which Negri was a fundamental part. For the Workerists, the potential for a revolutionisation of work lay with the 'mass worker' (for example, the Fordist de-skilled, homogenised worker) until around 1977, when Negri re-evaluated his ideas

Panzieri considers the bringing together of the social labour and the machine to be central to capitalist production.

Hardt and Negri build upon this argument in their section 'The Sociology of Immaterial Labour' in *Empire*, where they optimistically propose that:

Today productivity, wealth, and the creation of social surpluses take the form of cooperative interactivity through linguistic, communicational, and affective networks. In the expression of its own creative energies, immaterial labour thus seems to provide the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism. (2001 p.294).

Paolo Virno's argument is analogous to and yet distinct from those of Hardt and Negri. Like Hardt and Negri, Virno discerns the symbiosis of *work* with *general intellect/social knowledge* as the aspect of neoliberal capitalist production in which the potential to affect socio-political change lies.[7] However, Virno sees this symbiosis as a hindrance to *action* because, he argues, 'work has absorbed the distinct traits of political action.' This absorption, he continues, was made possible by: 'the intermeshing between modern forms of production and an intellect that has become public…' (1996 p.189). The 'intellect that has become public' is found in the knowledge aspect of the immaterial labour in Hardt and Negri's writings and this is also the information that charms the workers, from Panzieri, put to use otherwise. Virno's response to the hindrance of action is to call for a 'redefinition of political praxis' (1996 p.109). Whereas Hardt and Negri call for the assimilation of *intellect* and *work*, Virno calls for the assimilation of *intellect* and *action*. So, how does one (or rather, many) utilise social knowledge for the greater good?

It is contended here that the potential of immaterial labour is (partially) realised through the practice of art-activism. The art-activists are the closest to Virno's call for the symbiosis of intellect and action through their use of capitalist technologies, associated with work, in order to act against capitalism. To return to Panzieri, the informational techniques that accompanied the introduction of large-scale industry have now evolved into a kind of reskilling of work with immaterial skills and knowledge based in socialised labour. These informational skills, in turn, are put to use otherwise by the art-activists.

The social mobility of art-activist groups can be attributed to an increase in knowledge, information, communication and affect within general work. The activists use their intellect - garnered from the use of capitalist technologies and the heterogeneous nature of their practices - for action rather than put it to work *for* capital. Art-activism assimilates *intellect* with *action*, free from the necessary ties of work and the economy, because of art's relative position to autonomy. The politicised practices of art-activism balance on the axes of its relative autonomy; that is, they simultaneously operate as art and also as non-art. In this way, the art-activists use capitalist technologies and techniques for their anti-capitalist actions whilst, at the same time, being socially-engaged (as opposed to autonomous).[8] The art-activist group etoy provides a good example of this type of practice.

etoy is an Internet-based (pseudo?) art corporation. The group adopt aspects of the 'information economy' whilst criticising it. This is how they pitch themselves:

etoy, expanding reality since 1994, redefines art history by replacing the obsolete role of the genius by a network of collaborating agents: a group of exceptional artists and engineers who exploit technology to create and explore new territories. Given these circumstances, the artist's signature and the stroke of the brush are no longer adequate indicators of authorship and authenticity. (etoy n.d.)

This statement is very telling about their anti-authorial leanings. Apart from what etoy.CORPORATION put out on the Internet (which could be interpreted as propaganda of a kind), the information on etoy is scarce. Its corporate identity is prominent – orange and black are its colours, and the members wear orange boiler suits, with shaven heads and dark glasses. An orange shipping container - a common symbol of the global economy - often accompanies its 'material' projects. You can buy shares in the company - etoy.CORPORATION - which is one of the ways in which it survives financially, alongside funding from organisations such as the Arts Council in Switzerland.

etoy directly responds to the immaterial nature of today's communication society; the group states that it 'exploits technology' rather than embraces it. The group's Hacking Project of 1996 is described on their website as an attempt to expose the dangers of the Internet rather than an intention to use it for their own gain. The group also claims to be non-profit making: 'The firm shares cultural value and intends to reinvest all financial earnings in art.' (etoy n.d.). In his essay 'Artistic Auton-

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about the mass worker. Within the Autonomia movement, the 'socialised worker' became pertinent for change.

[7] In the so-called 'Fragment on Machines' in the *Grundrisse*, Marx coins the term 'general intellect', which refers to the knowledge based on social production and objectified in machines – the informational content associated with machine work. (Marx 1993 p.706) This intellect is that which Autonomist thinkers such as Hardt, Negri and Virno are referring to in their respective arguments.

[8] We are reminded here of Benjamin's call for the overthrowing of the fetters of production through changing or improving the apparatus for the revolutionary cause. He states:

Here too, therefore, technical progress is for the author as producer the foundation of his political progress. In other words, only by transcending the specialisation in the process of intellectual production … can one make this production politically useful; and the barriers imposed by specialisation must be breached jointly by the productive forces that they were set up to divide. (Benjamin 2008 p.87)

The art-activists who utilise tactical media or employ haktivist means change the function of the capitalist apparatus.

omy and the Communication Society', Brian Holmes argues that the proliferation of artists groups that perform mimetic interpretations of 'the values projected from the consulting firms and human-resources departments', emerging in recent years, demonstrate the extent to which the artist critique has been absorbed by capitalism. (2004 p.551).[9] He furthers his argument by claiming that the permeation of the artworld by transnational state capitalism is only restated in the collective work of artists groups that subversively adopt the traits of 'neomanagement'. Despite their subversive nature, Holmes concludes that the emergence of groups like etoy - 'which endlessly reiterates the forms of corporate organisation' - are sorry testimony to the capitalist absorption of the artist critique (Holmes 2004 p. 551).

I believe that Holmes misses the point. I think this because etoy use the tools and technologies of corporate neoliberal capitalism against it and propose that their practice could be understood in terms of the 'socialist use of machinery' that Panzieri calls for. I agree that etoy replicate the numerous aspects of a corporation under neoliberal capitalism – the adoption of the network; the centrality of the project to their practice; the selling of shares; the branding; the employment of individuals with diverse skills - so well, that even Holmes appears to be fooled. However, *how* these tools are used is central to etoy's practice.

The Toy War action occurred as a result of a corporation throwing its virtual weight around and exemplifies the kind of use that capitalist technologies can be put to for anti-capitalist purposes. In 1999, five years after etoy's establishment, etoy was approached by eToys Inc. - an online toy retailer - with an offer to buy their web domain (allegedly valued at half a million dollars). etoy refused and continued to turn down further offers. eToys Inc. retaliated to etoy's refusal by taking legal action to have etoy.com taken down and its associated email accounts. This is when the Toy War began. etoy describe the 'war' as follows:

TOYWAR.com did not follow common political strategies: TOYWAR.com successfully mobilized the net-community (among them hundreds of journalists), involved the enemy in a insane TOYNAM situation (preventing overview by fighting on too many layers with the help of 1799 soldiers) and turned eToys´ aggressions against themselves (martial arts for the net) until art finally neutralized the naive power of money. By playing a game on the web, in the court room and on the NASDAQ the etoy.CORPORATION and supporters forced eToys to step back from their aggressive intention. The reason for this success was the combination and involvement of all

kinds of people (artists, lawyers, riot-kids, university profs, business people, freaks and djs). (etoy n.d.)

etoy effectively recruited 1799 'agents' to assist them in crashing the etoy website in the 12 days leading up to Christmas. They employed technology that would take a purchase to the checkout and then cancel at the last minute. This has been termed a virtual 'sit-in'. Real customers were unable to make their own purchases due to the overwhelming demand for the website, which, in turn, led to negative reviews and also affected the share price of the corporation. etoy succeeded in devaluing the eToys Inc. share price to $0 in 12 days. eToys filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2001.

etoy states that this action relied upon a 'distributed brain', the website states:

TOYWAR IS BEYOND YOUR CONCEPTION OF REALITY! THIS IS ITS BENEFIT. NO ONE CAN CONTROL IT... 1799 RECRUITED AGENTS BUILT ITS DISTRIBUTED BRAIN WHICH IS TOO COMPLEX TO DESTROY. MONEY & POWER DO NOT EVEN TOUCH THIS SYSTEM. (etoy n.d.)

This brain drew upon many diverse individuals, each with a particular 'skill' originally learned to assist capital – be it journalists, artists or web programmers – that was put to use counter to capitalism. The social nature of this type of action, coupled with the virtual technological dimension – that is, the virtual 'sit-in' – produced a result that, ultimately, bankrupted a very successful e-commerce corporation. This brain is precisely the type of social brain envisioned by Paolo Virno when he calls for the assimilation of *intellect* with *action*. The general intellect fostered originally in machine work that confronted the worker is now knowledge put to use – social knowledge gained from technological processes coupled with action.[10]

Conclusion

The kind of misunderstanding that I accuse Holmes' of making in this paper, when he states that etoy is sorry testimony to the capitalist absorption of the artist critique, is precisely why the 'neutrality of machinery' has to be re-evaluated in practices of an haktivist or electronic civil disobedient nature. Holmes believes that neoliberalism founded practices like etoy's; however, it is art-activist groups such as etoy who use capitalist technologies against capitalism itself through coupling social *knowledge* with *action*. Rather than assisting the flow of

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[9] The 'artist critique' here refers to Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's thesis *The New Spirit of Capitalism* in which they argue that the artist model of critique has been absorbed by capitalist business models post-1968. The 'artist critique' criticises capitalism for being a source of oppression and a source of disenchanted goods leading to disenchanted lifestyles. (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007 p.37).

[10] Etoy are not alone. There have been similar results to actions that physically mobilize people through using communications technologies. Reclaim the Streets organised a 'Carnival Against Capitalism' in June 1999; more recently, members of the Occupy movement are tweeting about occupations and actions against capitalism. The Zapatista's plight in Chiapas, Mexico was also assisted through the employment of the Internet for the dissemination of information.

capital, they throw a virtual spanner in the works. This spanner is created with the knowledge that capitalism fosters in its shift to immaterial production and that may have been trained in the workplace. And this is where the potential lies, but only if we acknowledge the change in the use of machinery through the re-appropriation of general intellect, perhaps even the adaptation of machinery, when used counter to capitalism.

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Beyond the Zapatistas: Creating a Typology of Information and Communication Technology use by Indigenous Social Movements

Larenda Twigg

University of Bradford, UK Email: l.n.twigg@student.bradford.ac.uk

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have impacted multiple spheres of society and created fluid boundaries between politics, cultural values, identity and collective self-reliance. For groups on the margins these new forms of participation and alternative public spheres have been seen to offer an empowering potential to bring about social change, highlighted most strongly by the use of the emerging technology in the 1990s by the Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico and their supporters. As ICTs grows it is important to re-examine the possibilities and significance of this technology for indigenous social movements beyond the Zapatistas. Questioning assumptions made by proponents and detractors of new forms of ICT, including social media, will get us beyond the what and how of the tools to the very value of these technologies for indigenous movements. Taking full advantage of online organizing requires defined goals and focus as social media alone cannot transform desire for social change into a movement. By creating a typology of the various ways the web is currently being used by various indigenous nations, organizations, individuals and supporters we may begin to explore important questions such as: whether hype surrounding the revolutionary potential of ICTs distracts from needed social change efforts and analyses? And what is the meaning of a global indigenous movement for local activists?

Introduction

Marcos is gay in San Francisco, a black person in South Africa, Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Isidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, an Indigenous person in the streets of San Cristóbal .... In other words, Marcos is a human being in this world. Marcos is every untolerated, oppressed, exploited minority that is resisting and saying, "Enough! (The Zapatistas, 1994, p. 320)

On January 1, 1994 in Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, a small group of armed guerrillas came to the attention of a global audience. Emerging from a backdrop of 500 years of indigenous struggle, few could have envisioned the international reach and support the Zapatista National Liberation Army (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN))*,* or Zapatistas, would achieve in a few short weeks. Through a combination of consensus building, powerful and expressive use of language, and the embracing of new information and communication technologies (ICTs)[1] the Zapatistas found support from local indigenous, national and international NGOs, and "left-wing" celebrities.   Additionally the Zapatistas, especially their spokesman Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, provided inspiration for marginalized groups around the world fighting for social change.

The Zapatista movement is significant not because an indigenous group took arms to establish autonomous communities but because they energized people across traditional community barriers evoking ideas of global connection between people struggling for change. The fluid boundaries and connections created by this movement reflect the theoretical promise highlighted by scholars on the potential of the Internet emerging at the time. By providing space and voice for those outside the mainstream, ICTs (especially the Internet) were credited with increasing pluralism and allowing for greater participation in media creation. Thus the technologies were promoted as offering an empowering potential to bring about social change (Cairncross, 1997; Castells, 1997; Giddens, 1998; Giddens, 2002; Held et al., 1999; Jenkins, 2006; Kavada, 2005; Negroponte, 1995; Rosenau, 2006)

Despite the numerous case studies on the Zapatista's, there is much area still to be explores on how ICT mediate, frame, and influence practices of those on the margins, especially indigenous groups. Indigenous communities from the Zapatistas of Mexico to the Anangu of Australia have confronted these technological, political and culture potentials and challenges through the use of many different forms of ICT to improve communication, participation, and address local and global issues (See: Marks, 2003; Olesen, 2005; Singleton et al., 2009; Dyson et al., 2007; Mathur and Ambani, 2005).

While there have been special issues of journals and edited book volumes dedicated to Indigenous groups and Information Technology, the current literature has not delved deeply past the use of ICTs as tools for move-

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[1] ICT is an umbrella term that includes many types of communication technologies from fax machines, video and mobile phones to computers, the internet and social media.

ments and organization (See: Roy and Raitt, 2003; Cultural Survival, 1997; Wiben Jensen and Parellada, 2003; Dyson et al., 2007; Landzelius, 2006b). Active participation with this new media technology may create new activists and supporters feeling apart of and invested in a movement without ever meeting face-to-face. At the same time it may be argued that the "clicktivism" of online activism creates fly-by-night supporters of collective actions and not new members invested in the cause. Use of this technology is also further complicated by obstacles to the technology. These obstacles include access to devices, to telecommunication networks, in language, and in the assumptions of software design. So not only is there a need to understand how ICTs are currently being utilized within indigenous movements but also the implications and meaning of ICTs for indigenous activists and indigenous communities – whether they are interacting directly or indirectly with the technology. In other words, the technology may have an impact as a process changing conceptions of social movements and identities within movements – those social psychological dynamics which Snow and Benford (1988) have called the framing process.

With scholarship in the area of ICT and Social Movements concentrated on either case studies of a few regions (the Zapatistas, the Alter-globalization movement[2], the environmental movement, the Anti-Iraq War movement and recently the Arab Spring) or on the technology's role in shaping transnational activism (See: (Bennett, 2003; Cammaerts and Van Augenhove, 2005; Downing, 2001; Ford and Gil, 2001; Kidd, 2003; Kahn and Kellner, 2004; Stein, 2009; Stein, 2011), it is difficult to generalize these studies to ways in which the vast majority of social movement organizations (SMOs) are using the internet (Garrett, 2006; Stein, 2009).

Analysis needs to look beyond how the tools of technology are used to the conditions governing the social process and structures. A framework for such an analysis may be found by applying structuration theory, which considers how people both influence, and are influenced by, social practices and systems they create and maintain. This reciprocal interaction in structuration exist because, as Giddens (1984, p. 22) argues, "All social actors, all human beings are highly 'learned' in respect of knowledge which they possess and apply, in the production and reproduction of day-to-day social encounters." Knowledge of these social practices is evident both in what people have to say about their actions (discursive consciousness) and in their actions themselves (practical consciousness) (Giddens, 1984, p. 4).

To begin to explore these issues an analysis of websites has been undertaken to provide a starting point for a ty-

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[2] Although often referred to as anti-globalization movement by the media and critics, many activists prefer alter-globalization as a more accurate reflection of the movement use of global networks and cooperation to oppose negative effects of neoliberal globalization. See Chesters and Welsh (2006 and 2011, p. 25-26) for more on the Alternative Globalization Movement.

pological categorization and further frame analysis. While several different types of ICT from mobile communication to social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, eventually need to be considered, websites provide a typological starting point as they highlight several aspects of technology use - including the interaction between the technological, cultural and organizational aspects of digital technology.

Networks and Struggles: A Short Background

The example used by many early scholars of the internet to prove that ICTs allow for easier and better mobilization of people for political action was the use of the new technology by the EZLN to get their voices heard through web pages, blogs, e-mails and alternative media (See: Best and Kellner, 2001; Castells, 1997; Cleaver, 1998a; Cleaver, 1998b; Holloway, 2005; Holloway and Peláez, 1998; Kidd, 2003; Morello, 2007; Olesen, 2005; Ronfeldt et al., 1998; Rosenau, 2006; Van Aeist and Walgrave, 2002). The key place of the Zapatistas in these studies is due to the network of supporters around the EZLN as one of the first groups or movements to utilize the new possibilities and power of ICTs to unite radical and marginalized social movements and leading to a "renovation of politics and language." (Rosset et al., 2005, p. 40)

The dynamics enabled by the Zapatistas' use of the Internet and alternative media is one of the most unique, and possibly significant, features of their rebellion when compared to past uprisings in Latin American or around the world. ICT technology provided a space beyond the control of the Mexican government through which the voice of the EZLN could be heard, particularly through Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. This communication network created an "arena of radical inclusivity" comprised of people and groups who had historically been excluded.(Downing, 2001, p. 219 - 220) The idea of a global connection between marginalized groups expressed by the EZLN in their communiqués inspired others to post and disseminate the messages (Castells, 1997; Cleaver, 1998b).

In many ways the Zapatista Movement was the first to take advantage of the dynamic two-way communication capabilities of the Internet – the interactivity that the new medium allows for a user to both receive and send information – allowing for the creation of a dialogue and not a monologue. In the years that followed, the reality of their daily struggle in poverty and marginalization, combined with the message of a new way to conceive of power, pulled activists together in solidarity. While these ways of networking, from websites to protests, were not always formally organized by the EZLN, they were supported by them indirectly through the ideas disseminated in writings and directly through letters, audio and video recordings sent for specific gatherings.

This activity of support and solidarity has led to what Cleaver (1998a, p. 622) calls "a 'Zapatista Effect' reverberating through social movements around the world." Hard to find in main stream media, the messages were

posted in full by supporters and sympathizers of the EZLN to forums, as well as, emailed to networks dealing with issues from anarchism to North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to Latin American politics to indigenous issues to environmental protection to women's rights. Additionally, web sites in support of the EZLN were created around the globe, such as *Zapatista's in Cyberspace* created by Cleaver (http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/zapsincyber.htm) as a site to catalog online activity around the EZLN and *Associazione Ya Basta* (http://www.yabasta.it/?article201) created to bridge Zapatista ideas with regional issues in Italy.

Cleaver effectively argues how the Zapatistas use of the Internet to change power relations enabled and invigorated widely dispersed groups in opposition to governments to link into a solidarity networks, in a non-hierarchical fashion, with more strength and new power relationships. This effect of the Zapatistas, according to Cleaver, has rewoven "the fabric of politics – the public sphere where differences interact and are negotiated." (Cleaver, 1998a, p. 637)

This groundswell of support and networking created concern for governments around a new threat - Netwar – a term coined by Ronfeldt and Arquilla (1998; 2001), researchers for the US Department of Defense at the RAND cooperation. They characterized Netwar as networking activists who assume informal, ad hoc relationships shifting their participation depending on the issues of the moment to transform the context and the conduct of conflict. The Zapatista's "more than any other, inspired social activists to realize that networks—and netwar—were the way to go in the information age," Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2001, pp. 171, 180) claim, when "the EZLN's "war of the flea" gave way to the Zapatista movement's "war of the swarm." The war of the flea being the guerilla tactics used by the armed EZLN and the swarm being international NGOs and civil society. Ronfeldt and Arquilla credit the local and global civil society support as the key factor in halts of Mexican military operations at certain points. From a military perspective, Ronfeldt and Arquilla see this as something for states to protect themselves against. This government security fear was (and still is) a significant message to activists as to the power they may generate using new ICT.

Related to the Zapatistas' solidarity network of supporters are independent groups which have emerged generated through the ideas and inspiration of the EZLN messages and from events such as *Encuentros* (Encounters).[3] One such network is the Peoples' Global Action

(PGA), a transnational network to coordinate communication in the anti-neoliberal movements and "has been at the heart of the majority of the anti-capitalist spectacles and mass demonstrations since its formation in 1998." (Khasnabish, 2008, p. 14) The Italian group *monos blancos,* founded in 1997, provides another kind of example as a group which has modeled their tactics on the Zapatistas'. When asked about *monos blancos* creation they stated, "We have a dream in which we were born on January 1, 1994, alongside the Zapatistas. The dream is good and not a total fantasy, but the reality is different." (Bob, 2005, p. 134)

The Electronic Disturbance Theater (EDT) also created a new form of direct action in support of the Zapatistas with the virtual sit-in. Activists around the world repeatedly accessed the Mexican government's website to slowdown and block traffic (Atton, 2004). EDT and others have since used this technique to support multiple other movements against entities from governments to corporations. Inspiration of this type has resulted in the creating of the concept of "Zapatismo" as a link between activists and groups such as Anonymous could also be seen as following this model (Kahn and Kellner, 2004). These types of connections and network building, initially inspired around the Zapatista solidarity, gave rise to many alter-globalization campaigns forming new social movements referred to as the "Movement of Movements" (Callahan, 2002; Mertes, 2004; Rosset et al., 2005; Gilman-Opalsky, 2008). The Zapatistas, therefore, can even be seen as a spark to the protest events around the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle, Washington in 1999.

Studies of these various uses of ICTs by the Zapatista Solidarity network show how a movement can be sustained in an electronic environment, as well as, how links between social movements can help to inspire, motivate, and transform tactics within movements. It is understandable why the use of ICT would be promoted for use in other indigenous struggles for rights and recognition. For indigenous groups, though, the use of ICTs raises questions about technology's potential to be "indigenized" and the impact of the technology on power. That is, Does the technology force a group into a particular frame of communication and tactics due to the very nature of the hardware and software (which may differ from indigenous ontological views)? Does the promoted hype about the revolutionary potential of ICTs distract from more realistic problem analyses and needed social change efforts?

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[3] The Zapatistas' first large political meeting was the August 1994 National Dialogue for Democracy, Freedom, and Justice. The first meeting between the Zapatistas and Mexican civil society allowed dialogue on the direction of the EZLN and Mexican society in the weeks prior to the 1994 Mexican Presidential election. This national meeting (which had also attracted a wide range of international media interest and political tourism) was fol-

lowed in April 1996 with the Continental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism and then in July the First Intercontinental Encuentro. These large-scale face-to-face meetings provided a space for people to make the event their own by bringing their own issues and ideas to the table and were first organized horizontally through the use of email and web pages. Following on these Encuentros have been multiple Intercontinental and local meetings in Chiapas and elsewhere including the USA and Spain.

Beyond Solidarity and Protests

The extreme optimism of ICTs in the early nineties has been tempered with more recent critiques of the technology as tools of a new type of colonization, information poverty and accommodation to mainstream discourse which may produce destructive outcomes for marginalized groups (Ess, 2002; Iseke-Barnes and Danard, 2007; Fair, 2000). Technology can be both friend and enemy and reflection is needed on why activists feel the pull to use these technologies or the need to disregard these technological discourses.

As the use of the technology becomes integral to everyday life in many societies, some commentators (Keen, 2008; Morozov, 2010) have not only warned of potential problems from the use of the technology but have also derided it for not achieving the lauded utopian potentials for new politics. "The same qualities that make these communication-based politics durable," van de Donk et al. (2004, p. 22) stress, "also make them vulnerable to problems of control, decision-making and collective identity." As the technology is developed within the same paradigms and epistemological assumptions of society in general, the technology, therefore, faces the same obstacles and problems emerging from existing structures of power and interest.

If individuals and organizations are not aware of the continuing need "to grapple with the problem of creating and recreating effective connections along a growing number of dimensions," the ICT tools will not be as effective as proponents extol (Cleaver, 1998b, p. 97). These same ICT processes which create solidarity may create divides between those using and not using the technology; between competing organizations to "pull" in an audience; and create email and compassion fatigue from the vast amount of information available (De Jong et al., 2005).

While online reporting and discussions of social movements may provide greater transparency than traditional media, it also places greater responsibility on the individual to find and navigate information. Another potential pitfall comes from the seemingly non-hierarchal nature of the internet which may cause problems for determining who and what information to trust and through the appropriation of the technology by political and culture elites (Cammaerts, 2008). When there is a vacuum of power (either vertical or horizontal) those with the loudest voices (or the voices writing in the dominate global language) may control the process of the social movement, discouraging true participation and collective decision-making on the direction of the movement (Coyer, 2005; Pickerill, 2003).

Adding Indigeneity to ICTs and Social Movements

Beyond the hype of these potentials and the pitfalls, how are ICTs being used by SMOs? Alternative media scholarship suggests functions which may be used by movements because of the interdependent and dialectical relationship between the two (Downing, 2001). Most of this literature is concerned with how social movements use media to create, debate, spread, and sustain their cause and therefore provides questions to ask when considering how an organization or individual is using a website in a marginalized or oppositional struggle (See: Carroll and Hackett, 2006; Gillett, 2003; Steiner, 1992; Stein, 2009).

Researchers McCaughey and Ayers (2003) have argued that activists take advantage of the internet to help achieve traditional goals, with strategies Vegh (2003, p. 71-72) classifies as either Internet-enhanced or Internet based. This creates three typological categories of Internet activism for Vegh: awareness/advocacy, organization/mobilization, and action/reaction. Drawing on this, Stein's (2009) study of US Social Movement sites found that the communication functions most essential are: providing information, assisting in action, promoting dialog, making linkages, allowing creative expression, promoting fundraising. Stein's study looked at a range of US groups from environmental, LGBT, alter-globalization, human rights, media reform, and women's movement. This research found that with the exception of information provision, the majority of SMOs exhibit no or low activity in the other five areas. Are these categories and functions applicable to other networks such as indigenous social movements, as is implied by the case studies of the Zapatistas?

Within the literature on indigenous use of technology there is a divide between those arguing for the utilization of ICTs as a means to increase the capacity and capability of the communities and those who see ICTs as feeding into the embedded histories and stereotypes and challenging the communities traditional forms for knowledge transfer (Leclair and Warren, 2007). Fair (2000), Arnold and Plymire (2004) and Iseke-Barnes and Danard (2007) have explored the representation of indigenous people online being conceptualized to an outsider (non-indigenous) view which means that the information is distanced from the people it is representing. If the social narratives for indigenous people are being framed by outsiders not only may the dominate hegemony be reinforced but the activism taking place in the name of the indigenous may not be representative of the goals or objectives of the community itself.

Arguments have been made that technologies have in the past been a force for the assimilation of indigenous cultures by helping to separate knowledge from cultural practice and spirituality in an effort to discard and modify indigenous knowledge to suit a western audience. The potential, though, for interactivity (through both audio and visual/pictorial) means that information can perhaps be spread more widely than with written text and in more culturally appropriate ways (Kamira, 2003; Singleton et al., 2009). This may help to account for the widespread and innovative uses of ICTs by indigenous communities, indigenous individuals and supporting activists and organizations (Michael and Dunn, 2007; Christie and Verran, 2006).

Kamira (2003), Trahant (1996) and Haladay (2008) assert that the representational power of ICTs strengthen indigenous communities cultural communication, both externally and internally, as long as cultural contexts are

Table 1: Typology of Indigenous Websites

	Type	Information Flow
Informative	News & Publication	Media (indigenous & supporters) → Indigenous, supporters
	Internet Reference/Portals	Webmaster/Organization →Internet Users
	Academic/Educational	School, Museum, Library → students/academics (indigenous & non-indigenous), supporters
Activist	Private/Nonprofit Organization (Issues Oriented)	Activists/Indigenous ←→Activists, Indigenous
	Private/Nonprofit Organization (People Oriented)	Organization → Activists/Supporters →Policy Makers/Governments
	Project/Campaign Specific	Organization →Activists/Supporters → Policy Makers/Governments
	Solidarity Support	Indigenous ←→Activist ←→Supporters →Governments
Community	Tribal Government and Politics	Indigenous Leaders → Indigenous Members, Supporters, Tourists, Journalists
	Community Networking	Indigenous ←→Indigenous
	Cultural Preservation	Indigenous ←→ Indigenous

maintained. The support for technology initiatives within native communities, such as K-net (Beaton et al., 2009), and partnerships for technology access, such as the Gates Foundation's Native American Access to Technology Program (NAATP) (Gordon et al., 2003), have enabled the use of ICTs in the process of cultural practice and

language preservation and recovery - in homes, schools, libraries, museums and tribal centers (Srinivasan et al., 2009; Scott, 2007). As Srinivasan et al. (2009, p. 164) argue the digital divide "is not simply a question of equipment or access, but the nature of how these technologies are embedded socially and culturally within the community." Further research needs to explore beyond the questions around how the technology is and could be used; and why some indigenous activists/communities are using technology and others are not. Researchers need to explore what effects digital spheres have on what it means to be indigenous and what forms a global indigeneity may take in campaigns for social justice, recognition and indigenous rights. In order to investigate these issues, creating a typology of indigenous web

usage provides a starting point to locate paths for further an analysis.

Typology of Indigenous Websites

An analysis of a selection of indigenous websites focused around indigenous rights and communities was used to form this typology.[4] While barriers to ICT adoption for indigenous communities' needs to be acknowledged and addressed, this typology deals only with the current uses and structure of websites. The reasons for the choices and meaning of this structure of ICT use and its barriers need be explored in more detail in future research. At this point, the website analysis and typology provide a starting point for analysis of the movements combining frame analysis with structuration theory. In the context of organizational websites, such as those examined here, analysis of the discursive and practical conscience of social practices may be doubled, "since structuration occurs between both individuals and organizations and between individuals and technology."(Stein, 2011, p. 366)

There have been published reports, personal accounts, and compilation lists of indigenous websites which highlight the various subject matters of these sites from overcoming remoteness, mobilizing resources, sharing information and improving work and education (See: Dyson and Underwood, 2006; Landzelius, 2006b; Mitten, 2003; Landzelius, 2003; Christie and Verran, 2006; Gaidan, 2007; Department of Communication, 2005). These studies do not help explain similarities and/or difference between the sites' features and information flows but they have provided a start for building this typology.

Using Stein's (2009; 2011) categories as well as protocols for evaluation suggested by researchers and media

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[4] There is no unambiguous and universal definition for 'indigenous people' but within this typology websites reviewed are those which were created by or support indigenous people as characterized by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UN General Assembly. (2007) *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2 October*. New York: United Nations Available from:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf [Accessed 12 March 2011].

personal working with indigenous communities (Janke, 2002; Dyson and Underwood, 2006; Weiler et al., 2005; Crossing Boundaries National Council, 2005), I developed criteria to help differentiate the various types of websites in the context of indigenous work. My evaluation has divided the websites into three broad categories: Informative, Activist, and Community sites/groups. As illustrated by Table 1, each broad category is further broken down into 3 to 4 sub-categories. The categories and functions for each section and subsection are interrelated and overlapping. I use the separate categories here as a heuristic strategy to provide a conceptual simplicity for understanding the diversity of website usage by various indigenous groups. As with any typology it does not reflect an exact representation of a reality of indigenous websites falling cleanly into any one category.

Informative

Informative sites are characterized by their flow of information from the website creators/owners to the users. These are sites to spread news and inform any interested supporter, community member, student, or random search engine user. In general, therefore, there are low levels of interactivity on these sites as they are providing information and not entering a dialog. They also tend to be more text based, although they may contain video and audio links (especially the news sites). Often acting as clearinghouse of information – of either information generated by the website owner or links to other sources - they act as archives for resources. While information rich – action, mobilization, education and cultural knowledge is promoted through the reporting of stories and histories rather than an interaction of experience.

A good example of this category is *Indigenous Peoples Issues & Resources (IPIR)* (http://indigenouspeoplesissues.com/) containing current news reports, links to books, publications, videos and links to easily share pages via Twitter or Facebook. The site run by an editorial board headed by IPIR's founder, Peter N. Jones, is a network of academics and activists, indigenous and others, with the goal of providing resources and news affecting indigenous people around the world. Their stated mission is to fight for the rights of indigenous people, in part, by providing articles, video and exchanging information to empower members to advocate for indigenous rights on a local and international level.

This category also includes museums, libraries and schools whose sites have been created to share their own collections of art, craft and artifacts and provide information on history and culture to a wider audience beyond their institutional visitors. Most of these collections were originally assembled by non-indigenous for whom indigenous people were the "other". While most of these museums and website equivalents have transformed into collaborative representation with indigenous people, such as the Te Papa Tomgarewa (Museum of New Zealand, http://www.tepapa.govt.nz), they are presenting information to indigenous and non-indigenous alike (Dyson and Underwood, 2006). Due to this information flow I

place web based e-learning environments with focuses on cultural appropriateness and communal knowledge within the Community category of this typology, such as those created at Edith Cowan University (McLoughlin, 1999) and the University of the South Pacific (Robbins, 2007).

Activist

Activist sites are characterized by a flow of information from organizations and indigenous groups to supporters and activists. Supporters are encouraged to then spread the information through campaigning, protest and other work to help change government or corporate policy and raise wider awareness in society on issues. This helps to create a collective identity and interaction around a conflictual issue and an informal network of a multiplicity of individual and organizations.

The Activist category is also the one with the greatest variation of richness and types of creators – this variation depends on the type of organization creating the site and whether the focus is on an individual people (clan, tribe or nation), rights for indigenous globally and a global indigenous identity or for a specific issue such as environmental justice in the Amazon or a ban on mining. The richness and objectives of the websites are also distinguished by the degree of "professionalization" between more globally focused international NGOs and more issue-oriented, grassroots focused groups. Most of the latter organizations or sites are those run by indigenous people or a network of indigenous organizations with a majority of volunteer staffing, as opposed, to the former more "professional" organizations with a combination of paid staff, interns and volunteers. These organizations are usually western run and organized (although paid staff, directors and CEOs include both indigenous and non-indigenous).

For this reason I place Amazon Watch (http://amazonwatch.org/) oriented around the issue of environmental protection of the Amazon and the promotion of human rights of the indigenous in the Amazon region in the People Oriented subcategory. A comparison between Amazon Watch and Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) (http://www.ienearth.org/) – highlights these differences in approach.

In October 2010 these difference were especially highlighted with both sites making links to 2009's top grossing film - James Cameron's *Avatar.* IEN highlighted "Pandoras on Earth" with information on campaigns against mining, tar sands. At the top of the page, three rotating images of indigenous at a campaigns (one which included Cameron but did not focus on him) and clear but not dominating buttons for donation at the bottom of the page. Amazon Watch on the other hand, highlighted very clear and easy actions, sign a petition and/or donate money, while drawing links to a "Message from Pandora" using photos, video and audio messages with James Cameron and Sigourney Weaver (one of *Avatar's* stars). There was also an emphasis on more traditional images of indigenous people on the Amazon Watch website, where IEN uses mostly pictures of the environment or

protest art. While the specific focus on *Avatar* has changed on both websites, the difference in emphasis between the sites remains.

The establishment of these Activist sites in support of political and social activism creates channels of mobilization and communication both for indigenous communities and people outside. Many of these sites have been important in raising the visibility of culture and issues for groups who have limited media access within their own country, such as the Mapuche (http://www.mapuche-nation.org/index.htm) and U'wa (http://uwacolombia.org) (Dyson and Underwood, 2006; Landzelius, 2006a). The irony of such sites and their success is the unavailability of the messages in the first languages of the people they represent. As the Maasai (Ngorongoro Indigenous Maasai Organization http://nimotanzania.org/) and Karen (http://www.karen.org) sites highlight, using a combination of traditional and modern day images and stories as well as English and Native languages may help transform a site from purely an information provider to a tool of communication and interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous to provide a path to be "agents of our change rather than victims of change"(Laizer, n.d.).

Community

While the categories above all included some elements of outreach or intercultural dialog, community sites are characterized by a two-way flow of information from indigenous to other indigenous and occasionally to interested non-indigenous people. These sites have been created to preserve and promote native cultures and governance and are used to connect Diasporas (created through colonization practices, war or migration for jobs), revitalize languages, allow culturally appropriate knowledge transfer, to support youth and delivery of native government services. They are sites with moderate to high richness and include multiple ways to interact through features such as forums, blogs, polls, and listserves.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islanders site (ABC Indigenous - http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/default.htm) and Planet Tonga (http://www.planet-tonga.com) provide good examples of this category with multiple interactive features including videos, comment sections, and message boards as well as links to twitter and facebook. These sites allow communities to pass on knowledge and debate the complex and confusing relationships around culture and identity construction (Lee, 2006). These sites also make it clear to the outside observer of the heterogeneous nature of the society, unlike the traditional picture of indigenous found on sites that are more outwardly focused. (This includes not only sites like Amazon Watch discussed above but also some native government sites which focus not on internal community communication but external tourism, such as the Cherokee North Carolina website (http://www.cherokee-nc.com).)

While scholars still question the incorporation of modern infrastructure and digital media into indigenous culture and lifestyles (Singleton et al., 2009), the large number of sites falling into this category is a testament to the increased pace over the last decade of ICT usage for production, communication and archiving. Native and non-native, web developers, computer programmers, government officials and community members have worked together in participatory ways to consider issues of confidentiality, knowledge transfer, and cultural. The community focused sites highlight the need for ICT use to be strongly linked to community aspirations, initiatives and short and long term objectives, in order, to provide effective support for the culture and for developments (education, social, or economic) that build on indigenous knowledge instead of western assumptions (Pamatatau, 2007).

The project for Indigenous Knowledge and Resource Management in Northern Australia (IKRMNA - http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/ik/ikhome.html) provides a good example of this collaborative process to build new software solutions for 'envelopment' as opposed to outsiders' expectations of development (Christie and Verran, 2006). In 2002 Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor, supported by the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC) and the Centre for International Research and Advisory Networks (CIRAN), had more than 25 indigenous knowledge resource centers around the world with 8 maintaining databases of knowledge from fishing to medicinal plants (Agrawal, 2002). Despite this prior work, Christie (2006) found, when beginning a section of the IKRMNA project, that no existing database software programs addressed indigenous needs - due to many hidden assumptions by developers on the nature of databases which created boundaries for holistic use by indigenous communities. Many of those previous databases were initiated by external development programs such as the UN and had not recognized the political, ontological and epistemological boundaries in classification of knowledge from indigenous and western perspectives. For ethnobotany, for example, there is a difference between the evolutionary, taxonomic understanding, and the Australian Aboriginal relationship of plants to animals, ancestors, songs or design which may undergo intergenerational renegotiation of knowledge (Christie, 2006). The IKRMNA project was able to link these paths together to create a knowledge database that was useable internally, as well as externally.

In the Informative category, I have placed The Indigenous Portal (http://www.indigenousportal.com) was created out of the UN World Summit on the Information Society by and for indigenous people. The site provides an extensive list of news items and links to indigenous organizations but the interactive community section of the site contains mostly spam advertisements rather than an online community. Other sites more focused on a specific communities, such as Planet Tonga and MyKnet (K-Net http://www.myknet.org), appear to be more successful (Lee, 2006; Beaton et al., 2009). MyKnet.org, a small network with a narrow range of abilities is still a vibrant social networking site by virtue of its users prac-

tices. "No one knows who created the first "shout out" or the first interactive guest book on MyKnet.org; nor can our respondents say for certain who started the first daily blog or listing of community events, or who created the first tribute to a deceased loved one, and so forth. What they know is that these functions are now integral to their MyKnet.org experience and contribute to their community life." (Budka et al., 2009) In other words, it takes more than just typing the word community on the screen to actually make a community. They need to inspire and facilitate efforts towards group identity, organizing, advocacy, and empowerment (McLaine, 2003).

Conclusion

Alternative media and social movement scholarship argue for the importance of ICTs as tools for movements and activists, especially those from marginalized communities such as indigenous. Questions formulated from the features and activities identified by social movement studies, alternative media studies, cultural studies, indigenous media personal and those working with indigenous communities on media issues have provided the analytical backdrop to this typology. Considering the claim of ICTs importance by first trying to understand the various types and uses of websites created by indigenous communities and their supporters generates a path for further research around issues of representation and power within these movements.

An important reason for creating this typology is its ability to highlight how groups locate themselves within the new and expanding information superhighway. Reviewing these sites expands the questions around why individuals and groups are motivated to make this engagement and the ways in which such digital networking reshapes activism, representation, and identity. This typology helps to distinguish the various structures and tools used to create a network of indigenous people, and enhance activism and identity. The potential for the internet and other ICTs as tools to be utilized for diverse purposes and peoples, for increasing indigenous activism, rights, culture and identity, and in both local and global contexts, are highlighted. The typology does not, though, answer the questions of human agency within larger social structures and practices, as addressed in structuration theory. Further research is needed to help to reveal this part of the relationship.

While this typology shows the various uses and some of the potential of indigenous websites, it does not evaluate the effectiveness of the various sites in achieving their goals. Is value gained for movements from online activism? Is that value worth the time spent on building websites/blogs/twittering, etc.? Statistical evaluations are possible and some figures of web usage are available for sites but those figures will only show a small piece of the puzzle. This is due to the fact that the typology (and ICT use in general) does not imply a straightforward or inevitable trajectory as "there is no simple algorithm to power equations."(Landzelius, 2006c, p. 297)

The realities of the internet may not neatly correspond to those in real life but they may reshape the realities by forging new identities and connections through online networking and community building. Exploration of how social practices, access, resources and knowledge may enhance or constrain ICT use and indigenous activism is the next step needed in the research to complement our understanding of the form of these websites. By focusing the research on indigenous movements, their activists, and their representation and identity in an online environment it can add to the systematic work of the framing processes and cultural dimensions of social movements. The framing theory can help in the navigating between the opportunity and organization of the indigenous movements which forms the actors shared meanings represented in their online activism and use of new technologies.

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Creative Futures: A Critical Survey of Contemporary 'Interfaces' as the Construction of Ubiquitous Marketing

Michelle Lewis-King

Anglia Ruskin University. Email: michelle.lewis-king@student.anglia.ac.uk

From the position of contemporary art practice, this paper interrogates the advanced corporatisation of the arts and creativity in a technologically determined knowledge economy and seeks to provide a critical evaluation of the expanding partnerships between contemporary art practice, new media and tech corporations, (such as Dell and Google) as projects emerging from these creative industry partnerships increasingly inform and define contemporary cultural encounters. The material focus of this paper will center on creative industries and their use of interactive media as an interface with public audiences. Material intersections between art, science and cultural consciousness will be explored via a critical survey of contemporary aesthetics in relation to interactive and augmented reality technologies and what this might imply for the future of traditional arts practice as a 'social' medium. Interfaces as an 'artistic' medium will be surveyed through the work of selected 'creatives' in order to map out the social contract fast emerging between information technologists and public 'users'. It is precisely the emerging work of 'creatives' that make transparent the critical shift happening within contemporary art and aesthetics as cultural emphasis moves ever more towards information and its social implications (ethics). In posing the question, 'Is contemporary human-computer interfaces a positive source for social development or the fabrication of a Foucauldian *Panopticon* machine par excellence ?', my discussion attempts to determine whether the convergence of interface technologies with creative practice are opening us up to transformative social interactions as media enthusiasts claim; or as Franco Berardi says, we are becoming subject to an *impersonal dictatorship*. (2011, 90)

Introduction

In our 'Digital Economy', we arrive at a critical juncture between the public and the private, the phenomenal and the simulacral, what has the agency of representation and what lies outside designation. The private-public contest for cultural dominance is currently taking place within the new social theater arising from the human/computer relationship.

Emerging human-computer interface (HCI) technologies are often viewed within contemporary popular culture via utopian conceptions of HCI as alchemical vehicles for social transformation, as drivers of innovation and unbounded creativity, or unique tools for constructing democracy that enable us to build a better world together via our networks and connections. Interfaces are of course an expansive topic, the parameters of which are in continuous development, so this discussion restricts itself to projects that employ interfaces attempting to augment or re-represent 'reality'.

The Creatives

In a mini documentary on The Creators Project San Francisco 2012, an art and technology multimedia festival, a quasi futuristic scene involving the total immersion of the audience within various hi-gloss entertainment cultures is evoked. In this fantastic techno-coloured world, we can reshape our own future as a society through our interaction with technology. Members of the public are shown running their hands in front of a screen, their movements instantly reconfigured and projected back at them as streams of flying birds that respond to the audience's gestural command. Other scenes include people playing with tangible interfaces (colored interactive cubes of light that respond to each other and to their placement by users), while others engage in smartphone enabled interactive games. One of the 'creators', Jamie Zigelbaum, tells us in the video, 'We use these technologies in order to communicate ideas... I think that helps us as a culture to be able to understand some of these things in a different way - you have to know how to play with them to know what they really mean'. (The Creators Project, 2012)

But before Utopia can be arrived at, a more critical glance back over the interactive works in the video reveal a distinct divide between the 'creators' (the corporate partnership between artists, designers, technologists and business - in this case the partnership of computer giants Intel with the media company Vice) and the audience. In the Creators Project, the active role of the 'creator' facilitates the reactive role of the audience. The creators construct and control the exact parameters of their theatrical experiment for audience interaction (otherwise the technology wouldn't 'work'), thereby limiting the audience's possibilities for indeterminate interaction (as you might have with other unpredictable humans). In this new theater, users' civic bodies are being redefined by the inter-

face's internal programming... the audience's 'real' bodies become disembodied as they are read and semiotically reconfigured by the logical processes of the interface. The depth of a user's being becomes increasingly subject to superficial 'identification' and transposition into a global body of informational data flows, courtesy of camera surveillance, sensors and tracking technologies (Hayles, 1999).

In terms of aesthetics, the role of the audience is made increasingly passive, reduced to a subjective position where they are witness to themselves as informatic data flow, as empty shapes that interfere with tracking sensor streams. Behind the spectacular images, what the 'spectator' is actually seeing of themselves, is a visualization of data itself. The sensors that track points at the edges of the body instantaneously render flat the complexity of the participants' tactile movements into a binary digitization of signs and symbols that inhabit a non-temporal dimension. In this new aesthetic, data and systematics are privileged over the complexity of being. The new cultural intensity of this hallucinatory vision (an image that is really an orchestrated communication between biosensors, facial analysis, data streams and fractal formations) heralds that the old order of aesthetics are shifting away from individual 'human' expression towards an engineered 'post-human' expression that fetishizes the computational process (Hayles, 1999). Yet, these new projections recall the old visions of Plato's Allegory of the Cave; or, Debord's La Société du Spectacle, (1972) where a late capitalist society is more in thrall to the image of itself than in authentic lived experience and social relations become completely replaced by representation and commodification...

Reality as Commodity

As the gap between creativity and commodity is narrowing down to micro-levels, our 'reality' increasingly shaped and reflected back at us by the marriage of financial conglomerates and 'creatives', another contemporary example of the blurring of boundaries between commodified and authentic realities is I Love Bees, (42 Entertainment, 2004). I Love Bees is an 'Alternative Reality Game' which takes consumers/users on a mystery tour of reality by offering a real-time form of storytelling that entices players by feeding them epic narratives with cliffhangers and the chance to become a character within the live unfolding of the game, as this description explains:

'Players log onto the game's website each week to find the latest clues and a list of the pay phones that will be called... Six main characters from the year 2552 prepare for a great war in the storyline. Each time a player correctly answers a pay-phone question, he or she is treated to 30 seconds of new material. Over the course of the game, the plot unfolds, revealing a menacing alien army that threatens 26th-century Earth and only intervention from the past can help. The most exciting element of the game for some players is the possibility that they will get one of the rare live calls in which the drama's actors talk to whoever answers the phone and then incorporate the conversation into the show itself.' (Terdiman, 2004)

The fact that the game is a marketing ploy for Microsoft's video game Halo 2 goes almost unnoticed by the users/players as one player remarks, "'You kind of lose the fact that it's a big marketing campaign because it's so well done and very gratifying in and of itself. Whether you go out and buy Halo 2 or not, you're going to have a great time"'. (Terdiman, 2004)

Embedded in the Design

The potential for creative industry to exercise considerable sway over the domain of social imagination is a growing trend. As the contemporary arts are ever more aligned to media and engineering, the more the cultural inscriptions embedded within the design of HCIs have the power to steer creativity towards the aestheticization and expansion of cultural consumption as a form of expression for its own sake. Put more plainly, our relationships are directed from the outset by the types of market-based decision making processes that interfaces were designed to facilitate. (Dourish and Bell, 2009)

This is made more apparent within the design process of Augmented Reality (AR). AR is the layering of informational content over visual and physical forms. Using dynamic three-dimensional geometry as a means of approximating and interacting with any surround, the mathematical semiotic interface literally directs the user's chaotic view of their horizon and points it instead towards local businesses, services and other forms of content so that the user can make 'informed' decisions. (Manovich, 2006) In AR world, our civic being and our horizons are being incrementally colonized and rationalised into a series of market-based decision making processes. AR creates a space where the boundaries between products, services, physical surroundings and fantasy are impossible to tease apart. Reality is transforming into a stream of commodified consciousness before our eyes.

As Matt Trubow CEO of Hidden Creative says in their promotional video, The Future of Augmented Reality, ''What we now want to embrace is computer vision, the ability to see the world for what it really is, as a "scene"'. (2010) This statement refers to the creation of immersive computer graphics via mobile devices that navigate the user's real-time experience to direct it towards products and services; but, as Trubow uses an all encompassing term such as 'world' and connects it with 'scene', the 'user's' authentic, disparate and subjective reality is superseded, marshalled and determined by a particular marketing reality instead.

Other examples of interfaces facilitating a construction of these 'computer visions' of reality are:

1) Ubiquitous computing (or everyware): post-desktop processing with multiple networked devices integrated into everyday objects, creating controlled environments capable of orchestrating together things such as personal biometrics with heating, lighting controls, etc. In the fu-

ture, the internet may be connected to everything via sensors. (Tang, 2010)

2) Tangible Interfaces: physical objects that directly interact or intersect with digital information, enabling digital bits to be physically manipulable by users. (Güiza Caicedo, 2010)

3) Wearable computers: computing and telecommunication devices embedded into clothing.

4) Intelligent Buildings and Spaces: 'Buildings and spaces wired to provide cellspace applications and monitor user interaction'. (Manovich, 2006, 225)

These ubiquitous interfaces have the capacity to create diverse microenvironments which adapt their functions to suit unique personal specifications, but as Lev Manovich of the San Diego Center for Research in Computing and the Arts tells us, they are also devices of surveillance, capable of monitoring and controlling the data-saturated space down to minute levels. (2006)

Reality is up for grabs, quantified via a ubiquitous web woven over our real environments by the virtual, allowing 'reality' to become perceptibly controlled and shaped by companies, buildings, remote computer centres, and by us as users. Gilles Deleuze prophesied in 1992 in his essay, Postscript on the Societies of Control, about how we have shifted from a discipline society to a corporatised control society:

'The conquests of the market are made by grabbing control … by fixing the exchange rate much more than by lowering costs, by transformation of the product more than by specialisation of the product. Corruption thereby gains a new power. Marketing has become the centre or the 'soul' of the corporation... the operation of markets is now the instrument of social control...' (Deleuze, 1992, 2)

Society of Control

Is it paranoid to suppose that there are growing numbers of private interest groups currently exploring ubiquitous interface devices as a means of social control via marketing? It is tacitly understood that most technological developments (creative, commercial, scientific, etc.) have a direct relationship to research funding agendas. For example, cognitive neuroscience attracts much attention from both academic and business research funding circles, with corporate funding for neuromarketing in particular outstripping academic neuroscientific inquiry. Companies want to know what makes you tick, as Nick Lee, Professor of Marketing Research at Aston Business School states:

'Neuromarketing is upon us. Companies are springing up to offer their clients brain-based information about consumer preferences, purporting to bypass focus groups and other marketing research techniques on the premise that directly peering into a consumer's brain while viewing products or brands is a much better predictor of consumer behavior.', (Lee et al, 2007, 200) or as neuroethics researcher Emily Murphy writes, 'Despite its vast poten-

tial, it is clear that... applications of neuroimaging within the marketing literature have been solely focussed on brands and consumer behaviour.' (Murphy et al, 2008, 293)

The addictive pleasure centres within the brain, via stimulation of dopamine receptors, is the intense focus of this research. Dopamine, a 'chemical messenger' similar to adrenaline, is a neurotransmitter linked to the pleasure (reward) response in relation to decision making behaviors. (Erickson, n.d.) Increasing the release of certain types of dopamine production creates an addiction response. (Schultz, 2001) If the addictive release of certain forms of dopamine could be made to have causal links with products involving reward responses (arising from the brand decision making process), then we as user consumers could be manipulated beyond our voluntary control, our psychic autonomy breached. Clearly there are ethical issues, as the bulk of neuromarketing is privately funded, with many advertisers not wishing to engage in dialogue about ethics at all, contributing to a monumental development of 'moral muteness' within the business community. (Morin, 2011)

This seems an inevitable direction of cognitive capitalism, which is roughly defined as 'commercial appropriation of the general intellect' and the harnessing of sociocultural forms of knowledge to capital and has become the basis for production in contemporary knowledge centered economies. (Dyer-Witherford, 2005, 74) The basis for the growing possibility of collective mental ensnarement and enslavement has been echoed in Negri's *Empire* (2000) and more specifically in Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's *After the Future*, (2011) where Bifo writes, 'The urban territory is increasingly traversed by streams of diasporic, heterogeneous, and deterritorialized imaginaries... Technological transformations have displaced the economic process from the sphere of the production of material goods towards the sphere of semiotic goods.' (2011, 93) arguing that we are 'witness the conversion of the media into tools of domination over the collective mind'. (27) According to Bifo, we are cognitariat infolaborers, mentally enslaved in a semiocapitalist society that incrementally accelerates its production of 'psychic stimulus' in order to permeate the mental strata with 'signs and symbols that create a constant state of excitement'... (94)

Conclusion

While it is undeniable that the HCI has opened up many possible routes for communication and networked creativity, when one considers the intense focus of corporate and government investment in the digital economy here in the UK (and abroad) to the direct detriment (in the form of severe funding cuts) of the traditional arts programmes and their humanist traditions, this redistribution of wealth from the arts to creative industries will inevitably direct our cultural economy. It is my contention that these projects and ventures I have presented in this paper point to the increasing trend of using of HCIs as the establishment of a theatre of social control, with

human creativity increasingly focused towards 'maximizing profit' and consumerist lifestyles instead as a means of autonomous self and social forms of expression. (Kim, 2009, 7)

In order to bring the social autonomy of creative practices and social exchanges back into balance, I reiterate in this paper Deleuze's call for forming new resistances to societies of control that are 'capable of threatening the joys of marketing'. I call for cultural (bourgeois?) assumptions already embedded within HCIs to be questioned and explored prior to their design (Dourish and Bell, 2009). There exist various contemporary artistic and cultural movements working in these directions. In the article, Can Artists Help Us Reboot Humanism in an Overconnected Age?, Ben Davis outlays artists who 'find ways to use technology against itself, creating subversive apps to... cure us of our info addiction', without a total rejection of the digital. (2012) Art critic and theorist Rosalind Krauss calls for us to hold out against the 'meretriciousness and vulgarity' of what she calls 'the post medium condition', (2012, 418) identified by Krauss as the result of contemporary culture's participation in the dissolving of the necessary distinctions between digital media and individual artistic mediums. She argues that artistic mediums are experiencing and all-encompassing homogenization through their subjugation to the digital; and, that digitization brings about a flattening and continual obsolescence of the material it encounters... its new aesthetic bland and murky. Krauss states the need for widespread refutation of the acceptance of digital obsolescence and that we should return artistic mediums and medium specific inquiries back to the centrality of contemporary aesthetic discourse or face their loss. (Krauss, 2012)

Other form of resistance could be to open things up, i.e., increase the creation of open source software and its gift economy that freely shares and improves upon existing forms of knowledge; or, to slow things down as much as is possible by exploring the sea of outmoded technology. For example, in professor Jeff Burke's Nevermind Ubiquity (2008), Burke states that we already have the necessary scientific and technical knowledge needed to solve the climate problem for at least the foreseeable future. Burke's writing centre

s around a workshop he gave at UCLA where he asked participants to imagine never having another mobile phone or better laptop and internet connection - what could be built then? The workshop explored and stretched different ways of using and redesigning what already technologically exists in order to create forms of production that are more sustainable and could suit personal needs.

My personal model of resistance attempts to widen the gap between the construction of a reality and its digitized commodification. I test this in my own artistic practice by returning interface back to its most rudimentary, intimate and healing form: touch. I research the possibilities of human touch as an interface, as a semi-subjective intuitive instrument for listening to and relating to the 'oth-er'. I place this in direct contrast to many new media artist's 'post-human' use of biosensors and software data that maps and reflects the likeness of their human subjects back at themselves as a perfected mechanical process. By placing human touch in contrast to the industrial-militaristic design embedded within HCIs, I am attempting to resist the digital (and its design lineage) as the dominant cultural means of communicating embodiment and bring digital communication back into balance with the ephemeral, sensual (human) communication that exists between people.

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Players and Puppetmasters – Alternate Reality Games and Consumer Power

Stephanie Janes

Royal Holloway, University of London. Email: stephanie_janes@hotmail.com

Power relations between fans communities and media companies have always been key to debates within Fan Studies. The extent to which fan communities 'resist' or remain in thrall to the power of media producers has moved from a resistant/incorporated dichotomy to the suggestion that fandom has become a normative mode of mainstream media consumption. Either way, the relationship has always been a delicate and complex one. As fan communities moved online, notions of digital convergence and collective intelligence were mobilised to argue for fans as empowered consumer collectives, increasing their ability to control decisions around their favoured media products.

This paper uses promotional alternate reality games to problematise notions of consumer/producer power in the age of digital convergence. Alternate reality games (ARGs) have been used to promote films such as A.I.: Artificial Intelligence (2001), The Dark Knight (2008) and Super 8 (2010). Although difficult to define, ARGs may be described as:

'A cohesive narrative revealed through a series of websites, e-mails, phone calls, IM, live and in-person events. Players often earn new information to further the plot by cracking puzzles... players... typically organize themselves into communities to share information and speculate on what it all means and where it's all going.' (Phillips, 2011)

ARGs are unique in that they are explicitly commercial entities, but encourage, and arguably require a mode of engagement which replicates that of a 'grassroots' fan community. Feelings of player agency are created via interactivity, but are arguably illusory since puppetmasters always control of the strings of the games they have designed. In this almost paradoxical situation, where an apparently organic fan community can be created by a corporation, who really holds the power? Furthermore, how relevant is the issue of power to such media consumers, if they are willing to collude with producers for the illusion of inclusion?

Introduction

Alternate Reality Games (ARGs) have been used by media corporations as part of promotional campaigns for Hollywood films, for around 10 years. The first ARG used to promote a film was part of the marketing strategy for Artificial Intelligence in 2001. Named The Beast by its Microsoft creators, it lasted for 3 months prior to the film's release and attracted large numbers of players, around 7,000 of whom formed the online player community known as the Cloudmakers. Since The Beast, films such as Cloverfield, The Dark Knight, and Tron: Legacy have launched ARGs as part of their marketing campaigns.

ARGs are unique in that they are explicitly commercial entities, but encourage, and arguably require a mode of engagement which replicates that of a 'grassroots' fan community. Feelings of player agency are created via interactivity, but are arguably illusory since puppetmasters always control of the strings of the games they have designed. In this almost paradoxical situation, where an apparently organic fan community can be created by a corporation, who really holds the power? Furthermore, how relevant is the issue of power to such media consumers, if they are willing to collude with producers for the illusion of inclusion? In an attempt to address some of these issues, this paper will consider how ARGs may problematise notions of consumer/producer power in the age of digital convergence.

Fan Resistance/Incorporation

Discussions surrounding the extent to which fan communities 'resist' or remain in thrall to the power and influence of media producers, structure a great deal of recent fan studies. Scholars have generally come down on one side or the other, creating what Abercrombie and Longhurst describe as a 'resistant/incorporated dichotomy'(Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1999: 15) with fans being either empowered, active consumers or passive dupes, when in fact these relationships are far more complicated.

These arguments are rooted in cultural studies discourse regarding the influence of mass media, most notably work carried out at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the 1970s by Stuart Hall et al (Hall, 1973; Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Hall, 1978). Many of these studies focussed on the idea that subcultures were creating alternative identities using the cultural symbols available to them, subverting their intended meanings to create oppositional cultures (Hebidge, 1979). However, Hall's influential Encoding/Decoding model highlights the limits of this textual politics. It maintains a level at which power structures influence

interpretation, suggesting that codification is always unavoidably 'structured in dominance'. There always exists a domain of preferred readings which have 'the institutional/political/ideological order imprinted in them and have themselves become institutionalised' (Hall, 1973 reproduced in During, 2007: 513).

Henry Jenkins' early work builds upon this, attempting to empower fandom as a response to what he saw as the demonization of fans, by both mainstream media and academia, as obsessive, anti-social nerds, desperate to own any commodity related to their chosen fan text (Jenkins, 1992). Focusing on media fandom's capacity for cultural production, he rejects Hall's theory as being too rigid. Instead he uses Michel De Certeau's ideas of 'poaching' (de Certeau, 1984: 229), emphasising 'the process of making meaning and the fluidity of popular interpretation' (Jenkins, 1992: 34). By repeatedly claiming ownership of 'their' texts, and actively utilising their images and characters in practices such as fan fiction, fans are depicted as resisting the power structures of the media industry, which expects a mass audience to passively consume its products. Jenkins' later work continues this relatively optimistic stance on the evolving relationship between consumers and media producers in the age of digital convergence (Jenkins, 2006a).[1] As consumption becomes a more collective, social process, Jenkins argues, consumers form 'knowledge communities' around texts. Fans participate in 'collective intelligence', which can be seen as 'an alternative source of media power' (Jenkins, 2006a: 4). The internet is crucial in forming this participatory culture. By pooling knowledge, groups can draw from a huge range of expertise, and because information is shared and valued equally within the knowledge community, it 'destabilises attempts to establish a scriptural economy in which some meanings are more valuable than others' (Jenkins, 1992: 140).

This vision of the grassroots fan organisation against the might of the corporate machine risks telling only one side of a complex story. Fans depend on the media industry to produce the very texts they love. Furthermore, they may be reliant upon 'average' viewers to keep the property popular enough that producers deem it worth continuing. It could be argued that notions of fan agency and resistance were overly celebratory and that fans actually exist as negotiated parts of the system. This can be linked to Althusser's theory of mass culture, which argued that the mass media is part of an ideological structure which can only work to reproduce dominant ideologies. This system is so involved with the very creation of the subject, that the subject can never truly form any kind of resistance to that ideology (in this instance, consumer capitalism) (Althusser, 2008).

Fan studies has increasingly tried to move away from this 'resistant/incorporated' dichotomy of consumer/producer relationships. Internet technologies have now

brought the two groups closer and made them more visible to each other. Moreover, they have created a sea of 'user generated content', causing the boundaries between consumer and producer to blur. And yet the distinction seems to linger. Fan studies still tends to read fan appropriation as fan resistance, when this is not always the case. ARGs provide an excellent space for examining this relationship as they offer a site of near-real time interaction between media producers and the audiences they court.

What is an ARG?

Common misconceptions are that ARGs are console games that tie in with films, virtual worlds like Second Life or MMORPGs like World of Warcraft. They are none of these things, but, it's actually quite hard to define exactly what they are. In their most basic form ARGs are interactive, immersive narratives. A more thorough definition might be:

'Campaigns which create immersive, interactive narratives by using a range of communication technologies and delivery channels. ARG narratives are often fragmented, and must be re-assembled through the collaborative effort of players, who may be asked to solve puzzles, crack codes, or participate in on- and offline activities to progress' (Unficton.com Glossary, 2011).

ARGs create buzz around a film, but they also offer more immersive engagement with the film's extended narrative. They usually set up a mysterious storyline, set in the world of the film, involving events that occur chronologically before or after the film's narrative. Puzzles are deliberately designed to be too complex for one person to complete; they require collaborative work. As a result, online communities form around the games, often in forums like unfiction, where players can discuss the unfolding narrative and work on puzzles together. As the narrative progresses, players can contact characters and companies in the game via various media including email, phonecall, and by post. In-game characters can contact players in the same way. The marketing bit kicks in when you realise that to solve the mystery, you have to go to see the film.

There are also a number of player-defined rules to the gameplay. For example, players and game designers (referred to as Puppetmasters or PMs) must adhere to the 'This Is Not A Game' aesthetic, whereby the game never actually acknowledges itself as a game. Websites must be convincingly real, phone numbers must actually work, characters are referred to as if they exist in real life. PMs are not to participate in forum conversations regarding their games, either as themselves, under pseudonyms or as characters, until the game has come to a conclusion.

Case Study: Super 8

As an example of a recent ARG, this paper will now outline the first stages of the ARG for JJ Abrams' *Super 8*, released in the UK in August 2011. Most promotional

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[1] See also Levy, 1997 upon whose notion of 'collective intelligence' Jenkins bases many of his ideas.

ARGs for films have their first clues (or rabbit holes) embedded in trailers. Once released, online communities come together to investigate them, and the game beings. In the case of Super8 the first teaser trailer was released in May 2010 before screenings of *Iron Man 2*. Fans immediately started breaking it down shot by shot in forums, and discovered that slowing down the flickering film reel at the end of the trailer revealed the phrase 'scariestthingIeversaw'.

This led to the discovery of scariestthingIeversaw.com (henceforth referred to as STIES by players) a website, set up to look like a remote PC desktop. Behind was a prompt to 'print all documents' which produced a printout on the player's computer displaying the text

'stop posting publicly. I can answer your questions, I have proof'.

The desktop itself could be interacted with, following the MS-DOS style prompts until players reached a screen with a list of files and MS-DOS commands. Trial and error revealed that RSCOM8 was the only working file, which, when teamed with the .PRINT command, prompted players' printers to produce two pages of what appeared to be a newspaper from around the 1960s.

The first page was a newspaper article on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The other was an advert for Rocket Poppeteers, a fictional ice lolly brand. If you turned one page upside down, laid it on top of the other and lined up the two very small x's on the page, a number of black splodges corresponded with certain words on the page underneath. When put together these spelled out

"No certainty if a live may be after us. We go underground."

Rocket Poppeteers then became a somewhat separate thread of the game. Those players who posted the coupon to the address in North Dakota, received a letter in the post, confirming their enrolment as a Rocket Poppeteer Astronaut. They were then sent certificates assigning them to one of 6 'fleets', each corresponding to a flavour of ice lolly. They could then play games on the website and gain points for their fleet. Finally there appeared an online store selling Poppeteer-branded merchandise, and ice lollies were also available in stores in the US.

Returning to the main narrative, the printable page on STIES was updated to include a picture. The photo contained a very dim reflection. When flipped and enhanced, a sold note could be read on the box, along with the zip code 25801, for West Virginia. A hat matching the one on the box was found listed, along with other items, on Craigslist, a local classifieds site, also in West Virginia. Notes on a billboard behind some of the pictures revealed a phone number. When players called it they heard a recorded voicemail message which led to the discovery of a blog by 'Josh Minker', (hooklineandminker.com). Via this blog it was possible to message Josh, whose main interest, bizarrely, appeared to be collecting rare fish.

Further updates to the printable file revealed a message from an anonymous source telling Josh to remove the

sales listing in return for information about his missing father.

As the narrative continued to spin out over the year prior to the film's release, Josh discovered that his father and the informant were involved with some ill-fated scientific research, and someone is out to get them. As the game progressed it came to involve more websites, characters, audio files, maps to abandoned psychiatric hospitals, an iPhone app, and an interactive trailer embedded in the console game Portal 2.

As has hopefully been demonstrated by this brief description of the Super 8 game, ARGs demand a dedicated, fannish sensibility from their players. This paper will now look to the ways in which ARGs may problematise notions of consumer power.

ARGs create or encourage the formation of what looks like a grassroots fan community within an explicitly commercial context

According to Jenkins, fan communities are by definition, self –created (Jenkins, 2006b : 137). So what happens if fandoms are corporate creations rather than organically formed communities? Although it appears that ARG communities piece together these elaborate backstories themselves, they do so with information fed to them by Puppetmasters, and their narratives ultimately arrive at a corporate-sanctioned conclusion. These strategies construct the space and conditions for fandom to occur whilst utilising it as part of a wider marketing exercise.

This conflicts with traditional conceptions of fandom as resistant to the control of media corporations. Matt Hills suggests that fans occupy a middle ground, whereby they may hold anti-commercial ideologies, but continue to display commodity-completist practices (Hills, 2002: 28). He argues that this is a lived contradiction for any fan, and rather than try to close it down, theoretical approaches to fandom must be able to accommodate it. Fans are therefore aware of their position and value within the commercial media industry and constantly negotiate that position. They are thereby capable of existing within the system that they apparently oppose (Hills, 2002: 28–35).

I would further Hills' argument by suggesting that not only do fans consciously occupy this middle ground, they do so increasingly without finding this position problematic. Forum conversations on Unfiction.com suggest that players are fully aware of their recruitment for and involvement in a marketing campaign for a Hollywood movie. They know exactly who is pulling the strings. But, if puppetmasters play by the player-defined rules, and a pleasurable, challenging gaming experience is delivered, they do not seem to see a conflict of interest. ARGs present us with a complex give/take relationship between fans and media producers, which might require us to rethink how we conceptualise media fandom.

ARGs commodify not only the text they are promoting, but the fan experience itself.

Hills continues by arguing that a media text's economic value is significantly changed by the fans' appropriation of the text, using Marxist notions of use value and exchange value (Hills, 2002: 32-35). The text remains a commodity in the sense of the 'economy proper', but its reclamation by fans creates a new exchange value 'through a process of localised use-valuations which are not entirely reducible to economic models' (Hills, 2002: 35). The monetary value of a *Batman* comic is based on a value system held by fans alone. It has more to do with the preferences of the individual fan than its actual economic value. For Hills this means the marketplace 'is underpinned by lived experiences of fandom' (Hills, 2002: 35). This augmented version of economics means that although fans are 'complicit' with consumerism, they are in a sense involved in it on their own terms. 'Power' or 'control' within this system cannot necessarily be located in one group or another.

But what happens when systems which belong to the 'economy proper' offer a pre-packaged and designed 'lived experience of fandom'? ARGs encourage and promote fan-like activity around a property, essentially offering a constructed fan experience. The experience itself is commodified, thus regressing towards back towards 'exchange value' and becoming a commodity in itself. It could be argued that power is therefore sliding back into the hands of media corporations, as they manufacture a fan experience which provides all the pleasures of participation, but is arguably structured according to corporate need to control online buzz and brand identity rather than handing any real power over to consumers to shape the product.

How relevant is the issue of power to such media consumers, if they are willing to collude with producers for the illusion of inclusion?

According to Simone Murray, the resistant/incorporated dichotomy left cultural studies unable to adequately cope with instances where fan communities will form 'uneasy joint ventures' with multinational conglomerates. If media producers are working with fans, there is nothing left for them to 'resist'. As Murray puts it, 'poaching can only count as such if there is a gamekeeping regime for it to flout' (Murray, 2004: 12).

An alternative view is that, it's not whether fans actually have power that is important, but whether they believe they have it, and how important this belief is to them. Natasha Whiteman's study indicates that fan identity is constructed around ideals of agency and the ability to collectively save or change the media products they care about. The commercialisation of these texts is still a sore point for many fans, but it is possible that as long as they feel a sense of participation and inclusion, then the actual extent of that agency is of little concern (Whiteman, 2009).

This argument could be extended to a broader category of media consumers. Perhaps the average consumer doesn't actually desire the level of control over media products so often ascribed to them. Complaints over the rigging of X Factor results don't seem to have affected its viewing figures. Viewers might even be aware of the level of manipulation at hand, but be willing to negotiate with it in return for a pleasurable viewing/gaming experience.

Fans were never mindless consumers, but neither could they ever claim complete ownership or control of their fan texts. The relationship between fans and the media industry has always been more complicated than many scholars might admit and the resistant/complicit dichotomy still overshadows narratives of fan/producer collaboration. The internet has significantly changed the way the two communicate, but we should be cautious in describing this change as overly co-operative, particularly when considering the motivations of companies in co-opting the enthusiasm and energies of fan communities in promotional strategies. ARGs represent a trend towards not just the co-optation of existing fan communities, but the very construction of a fan experience and community for a media property. It calls for a final tug away from the notion of resistant/complicit fans and the acceptance of fans who are increasingly comfortable with the commercial aspects of both the fan text and the fan experience. As Jenkins puts it,

'Some see a world without gatekeepers, others a world where gatekeepers have unprecedented power. Again, the truth lies somewhere in between' (Jenkins, 2006a: 18).

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Net Neutrality: A challenge to the hegemonic pro-market approaches to provision of information services or social welfare?

Kruakae Pothong

Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds. Email: cskp@leeds.ac.uk

The convergence of telecommunication and computing has sparked a multitude of information distribution platforms while enabling corporate convergence, which is as economically induced as politically enabled (Lax, 2009: 170). The new bandwidth-intensive online multimedia products and services, such as Internet TV, video on demand (VOD) as well as similar user-generated content, are the results of such convergence: ones that put increasing pressure on the 'best effort' approach to the existing IP Network, and thus spur an intensifying debate on net neutrality across different countries. Therefore, convergence has not only highlighted the increasing importance of network upgrade investment, but also regulatory issues regarding content providers' access to Internet end-users and potential discrimination in that access (Marsden, 2010: 29, Noam, 2010: 4). This may undermine the fundamental human right of free speech to the speakers, the audience, the public and their interests in exchanging not only the information and views of their choice, but also information that carries important public good or value that enables individuals to perform their duty as responsible citizens in a democratic society (Barendt, 2005: 25 - 30).

Against the backdrop of convergence and the subsequent increase of information platforms and services, this paper seeks to critique, review and analyse the net-neutrality debate. It argues that the pro-market approach to provision of products and services has been used to justify both sides of the debate. However, there are other values that the market cannot optimally provide, yet which need to be recognised and accommodated. The key points for further consideration should therefore be, as Marsden (2010: 59) stated, the extent of the discrimination following deviation from net-neutrality, its justification and implications for the vested interests in the debate.

Overview: convergence, net neutrality and the pro-market approaches to provision of information services

Technological advances, particularly in the telecommunication, computing and digital revolution, have created a number of new communication platforms for personal, commercial and public use. These advances have contributed to convergence, which is believed to be taking place in the three overlapping spheres: technological, economic or corporate, and cultural (Lax 2009 p. 170). One explicit example of such an overlap lies in today's complex Internet communication platform. Within this platform, the convergence of telecommunications, computing, and media has sparked an explosion of information distribution platforms. The corporate convergence, being more economically and politically enabled than technologically driven, reflects companies' focus on removing technological barriers in order to generate more revenue. The convergence of cultural forms is enabled by technological advances in a sense that they support the expansion of existing media and allow more flexibility in terms of viewing time and viewing devices (2009 pp.170-180). It appears this combination of increasing consumer demand for such flexibility and the emergence of new online non-linear multimedia information products and services in response to such demand has been increasing pressure on the existing Internet network and its current 'best-effort' or first-come-first-serve approach to manage traffic on the network. Such a constraint consequently prompts policy and regulatory concerns; one of which is about the neutrality of the network.

In addition to its connection to the above-mentioned technological advances and convergence, the Internet has grown in importance due to its relationship and impact on the economy and society. Curran (2012 pp.34-42) has summarised different phases of the Internet since its inception. As indicated in that summary, the Internet, since its commercialisation, has been contributing to wealth generation, increased productivity and growth (particularly in today's new information economy), and is now situated at the core of the global economy (European Commission 2011 p.2). In spite of the profound impact of the Internet on both the economy and society, Curran (2012 p.59) argues that "society exerts greater influence on the internet than the other way around" and, as such, the Internet remains an uneven playing field for players

in today's neo-liberal power structure where the rule of big corporations remains unchallenged.

Based on this notion, this paper seeks to examine whether net neutrality as a principle and public policy issue underpinning the next generation broadband policy poses a challenge to the hegemonic pro-market approaches to the provision of information services by reviewing literature on net neutrality and an analysing Internet policy documents in the US and the UK/EU. This paper also seeks to identify values reflected in the approach taken as well as those that may not as yet have received equal attention as the Internet has become a fundamental infrastructure of not only economic growth, but also social welfare. In so doing, this paper draws upon the concept of freedom of speech (Barendt 2005 pp.25-30) and the account of political, social and economic welfare values underpinning public interest (Van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003 p.185) to critique the current approach to net neutrality adopted by the US and UK/EU.

The net-neutrality debate

Given the function of the Internet in today's communication, economic and social activities, it reflects changes taking place in the three areas of convergence: technology, economy and culture. The Internet, technically described, is "a vast collection of different networks that uses certain common protocols and provides certain common services" (Tanenbaum 2003 p.50). According to this description, the Internet thrives on the connectedness between different networks and has, technically, not been designed to be controlled by anyone, including network owners or Internet Service Providers (ISPs). For this reason, the strategic importance of the Internet as a platform for communication, trade, transactions and social interaction lies in the ability of different networks to connect in order to facilitate the free flow of data. Additionally, the capacity of the networks that carry data in various forms is also crucial. Now that the capacity of existing networks has fallen under the pressure of heavy traffic, the networks need to either be managed or upgraded to accommodate the growing volume of traffic. This capacity issue has raised concerns over abolition of the neutrality of the network and the network architecture, which was not originally designed to be controlled. It is the pressure on the network capacity and the need to somehow facilitate the increasing flow of Internet traffic that leads to the origin of the principle of net neutrality.

Net neutrality, or network neutrality, is a principle that favours an open Internet over restrictions instituted by Internet service providers or governments on consumer Internet access. In supporting an open Internet, net neutrality advocates (Wu and Lessig 2003) claim that the principle will protect innovations at the edge of the network. These innovations include content, applications, network equipment and various modes of communication enabled by the Internet.

Net neutrality, as a debate subject, can perhaps be considered as a by-product of convergence in all three previously distinct spheres of technology, economy (corporate) and culture. The subsequent shift in information consumption behaviour from traditional information services to online non-linear multimedia and the supply of such services as well as innovative applications in response to such demand have driven Internet traffic beyond the capacity of existing network infrastructure. According to Marsden (2010), this network capacity issue not only causes problems in the 'last mile', but also in the backhaul. Thus far, it has been the network provider and ISP responses to this network capacity issue that has sparked the net neutrality debate. In this debate, many stakeholders and academics (Economides 2011, OFCOM 2010, Economides 2008, Sidak 2007, Sidak 2006, Yoo 2005, Yoo 2004, Wu and Lessig 2003) hold divergent views toward net neutrality standardisation. Those who oppose net neutrality (Sidak 2007, Yoo 2006) argue against net-neutrality standardization, reasoning that such a departure from pro-market approaches through regulatory or state intervention would distort the market and entrench monopoly. Their arguments appear to reflect the logic that because the net-neutrality debate stems from problems in the physical layer (e.g., twisted copper lines, coaxial cables, backbones, routers and servers), the focus should be on fixing that particular problem by encouraging investment to upgrade the physical layer (Yoo 2006). On the other hand, net-neutrality proponents like Lessig (2006) and Economides (2011) focus their argument on the detrimental effects of capacity constraints in the 'last mile' of the physical layer on the content layer (e.g., individual email, web content, and video programmes) and the applications layer (e.g., web browsing, email, Internet telephony like Skype, streaming media and data-base services), which has greater consequences on not only economic welfare, but also social welfare.

Network provider and ISP responses to such a constraint on the capacity of their asset, the IP network, by applying traffic management to increase the efficiency of their existing network or investing in greater capacity next-generation networks (NGNs), depend largely on the return on investment they foresee (Marsden 2010 p.63). This anticipated return on investment also involves several factors at play: regulation, security and the ability to discriminate, all of which will enable them to extract more surpluses from both the end-users and content as well as application providers (p. 63). For this reason, net neutrality as a debate encompasses two elements: the 'positive' element of charging for a better quality of service on the Next-Generation Networks (NGNs) underway and the 'negative' element of degrading or 'throttling' customer access to lawful content and applications available on the network (Marsden 2010 p.29). Both elements are based largely on economic values of the network as perceived by network operators and ISPs as well as others with vested interests since the debate centers on "pricing and cost recovery, and potentially problems of discrimination" (Sidak 2007 p.377). However, according

to Economides (2011), these issues affect both public and private interests. Yet, under the hegemonic influence of neo-liberalism (Harvey 2007), the dynamics of the debate revolve around the economic welfare value as defined by Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003 p.185). Market logic and economic welfare value are used to support the arguments of both sides in the debate (Economides 2011, OFCOM 2010, Economides 2008, Sidak 2007, Sidak 2006, Yoo 2005, Yoo 2004, Wu and Lessig 2003).

In response to the on-going debate, net neutrality as a policy objective or policy principle is an approach taken to safeguard the innovation on the edge of the network from the potential price and non-price discrimination in the access of content and application providers to end-users (Economides 2011, Marsden 2010 p.29). To date, both the US (by Section 230(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 describing the US Internet policy as amended by the Telecommunications Act 1996 and the EU (by Article 8 (4) (g) of the revised Framework Directive) appear to have taken a similar approach to support net neutrality, i.e., to preserve and promote the openness of the Internet and to ensure that it continues to contribute to the enjoyment of and respect for fundamental rights, including both freedom of expression and freedom to conduct business through transparency and competition promotion (European Commission 2011 pp.3-4, Federal Communications Commission 2010 p.27, Federal Communications Commission 2005 pp. 2-3). Again, even the contemporary approach to net neutrality adopted on both sides of the Atlantic reflects the hegemonic neo-liberal influence of market logic. Although according to Sieradski and Maxwell (cited in Marsden 2010 p.55), the emerging policy objective appears to be taking place in the interest of consumers as opposed to the previous attempt to treat net neutrality as a competition policy issue, this emphasis on the consumer protection angle or consumer choice is also part of market logic, according to Harvey's description in his summary of the history of neo-liberalism (2007). This logic assumes that by protecting consumers or giving them sovereignty, businesses are automatically forced to respond to their demands and will, therefore, vie with one another to satisfy such demands which, in turn, will encourage competition. In the context of network neutrality, it happens that the interest of consumers in accessing content and services of their choice is tied to their civic rights of freedom of expression and engagement in political participation and social activism, recognised as basic human rights by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 19 on freedom of expression (Sarrocco 2002), the US First Amendment and the EU Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (1953). This link, therefore, justifies and explains the contemporary ex post facto approach to state intervention to regulate net neutrality under the hegemonic influence of neo-liberalist market logic. However, such a pro-market approach to net neutrality may not be sufficient to prevent social welfare loss as markets in a global hegemonic neo-liberalism context may still fail to provide or choose not to provide products and services outside the range of what it deems most

profitable in order to sustain market efficiency (Harvey 2007 p.36).

Why net neutrality? The consequences of its absence

The Internet, given its low entry barrier for individuals or companies to use as a marketplace for new products and services (European Commission 2011 pp.2-3) has enabled an abundance of multimedia content and innovative applications to be exchanged online. This subsequent and unprecedented surge in Internet traffic since the platform gained in popularity and thus importance has, in turn, put more pressure on the existing network and its current 'best effort' approach to network management. This, as discussed above, has sparked and continues to fuel the net neutrality debate.

Given this situation, it is now widely accepted that some forms of network management are practised by operators to ensure the efficiency of their network and to cope with growing Internet traffic. This puts even more pressure on the existing network infrastructure, particularly, but not limited to, the last-mile (Marsden 2010). Such a non-neutral approach to network management, as discussed previously, has raised concerns over potential discrimination by not only network operators with significant market power, but also those that are smaller in both competitive and not-competitive market environments (Marsden 2010 pp.2-29). Such discrimination affects the interests of various parties, network providers, ISPs, content and application providers and end-users. An abolition of net neutrality would therefore have both economic and societal consequences as, according to Economides (2011) and Marsden (2010), the two are linked. These consequences are also connected because both economic and social welfare values constitute 'public interest' (Van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003 p. 182).

According to Marsden (2010 p.29), as well as Felten, Sandvig and Mueller, there are two types of problems arising from the limitation of existing network capacity and network operator/ISP responses to the growing constraints on their networks. One is the charge for a better quality of service and the other is charging the same for less. These problems have their root in the symbiotic relationship (Chan-Olmsted and Ha 2003 p.597) between the network and content and applications exchanged over it. For this reason the nature of the distribution system (in this case the Internet) also defines what the network can carry in terms of the type and amount of content. This implies that, with greater capacity, the network can accommodate more traffic and richer content as well as more innovation. It is this greater capacity needed to satisfy demand and the investment required to attain such capacity that gives network providers and ISPs the incentive to explore new pricing models in order to recoup their investments and to apply both price and non-price discrimination against content and application providers. Given the situation, network providers and ISPs have incentives to abandon net neutrality regardless of the level of competition in the market (Marsden 2010), but

more so when there is little or no competition (Economides 2011).

To a degree, the level of competition in the market is predetermined by regulatory tradition and rules applied to each different market (Marsden 2010). In the US, the change in classification of Internet transmission from "telecommunication services" to "information services" meant that Internet service is no longer subject to the non-discrimination rule (Economides 2008 p.215). The US decision to abandon common carriage obligation meant that the competition on the networks is to be inter-modal rather than intra-modal, which results in a monopoly on both cable and telecom networks. The EU, on the other hand, opted for the Local Loop Unbundling (LLU) policy, which has resulted in vibrant competition in the last-mile access network and a demonstration of intra-modality. However, the lack of inter-modality in most EU countries, including the UK, means that the choice of different types of network with different types of capacity is limited. Such limitation on choice also has a direct impact on the quality of service available, but excels in terms of Internet penetration. Even so, the EU LLU policy has made a minor impression on overall network management as small ISPs with limited purchasing power, and thus limited network capacity, may have even more incentive to abandon the net-neutral approach for discriminatory network management in order to increase the efficiency of their network (Marsden 2010 pp.31-35). This suggests that to use competition as the sole mechanism under the hegemonic pro-market approach to provide information services in the face of convergence of carriage and content, regardless of regulatory traditions and context, is not sufficient to address the broad range of problems raised by competing interests in the network (p.46). This also points to the potential problem of market failure, which may allow network operators and ISPs to discriminate against content and application providers in the absence of net-neutrality rules and undermine the consumer right to freedom of expression.

To date, each type of content and application exchanged over the Internet network varies depending largely on its transport technology, transport medium, and the size of the data packet sent to end users, and, in turn, is determined by the type of service offered (Simpson and Greenfield 2009, Simpson 2008, Noll 2004). Among these services and applications building up current IP traffic, some are user-generated content thanks to the Web 2.0 application features which, to network operators, are low-value traffic. Others are content provided by professional content providers (independent and major corporate), some of whom partner with a network provider. According to Marsden (2010 pp.10-12), both are subject to a certain form and degree of network management, the former more so than the latter. Such management can lead to negative discrimination (Marsden 2010 p.29), from the telecom side of the market to the point of threatening competition and the basic human right to a free flow of individual and public information. Even in the case of 'positive' elements of discrimination through exclusive deals between network and content providers, such agreements may initiate anti-trust issues (pp.101-104).

Given the significance of IP network capacity in this extended value chain of information transmission, network provider and ISP interests lie in the incentives to invest in network diversity, minimising the risks to and profit from their new investments. This may conflict with the interests of network users–content and application providers and end users-in exchanging and accessing information and applications of their choice should either form of discrimination be applied. Currently, both the means (the deep packet inspection (DPI) technology) and the incentives are there. The confluence of regulatory instruments requires network operators and ISPs to police the traffic on their networks (e.g., the EU Data Retention Directive 2006 (2006/24/EC), Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive 2007 (Directive 2007/65/EC) , and the US amended Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act 1994, CALEA). These require ISPs to build capabilities into their networks that would allow law enforcement to carry out electronic surveillance of specific individuals and have already provided them with the license and encouragement to install DPI, data storage, tracking and other packet-sniffing equipment. With the means in place and the simple motive of 'do it because you can', coupled with a classic market logic in relation to investment to upgrade the network, abandoning net neutrality "becomes a no-brainer job" (Marsden 2010 p.80). It does not require any complex business calculation or decision on the 'positive' discrimination case of charging for a better quality of service (QoS).

With the means and incentives in place, many, in particular, fear 'negative' discrimination, which is not limited to the last-mile access network through degrading or 'throttling' consumer access to lawful content and applications available on the network (Marsden 2010 p.29). Such practice, if allowed to prevail, would result in an anti-competitive effect with long-term consequences for the economics of the Internet (including innovation and freedom of expression). The lack of transparency in network operator usage of network management affects consumer choice in terms of access to use or consume their preferred content and application as well as their choice of Internet access and quality of the service. An example is the case of Madison River Communications in the US: it had been blocking a rival VoIP service on the ground that such practice was a legitimate business practice for a vertically integrated ISP into voice phone service to block its competitor (Vonage) by degrading Vonage customer Internet access (Marsden 2010 p.35). This led to a 'smoking gun' regulatory action to prevent such a practice, as seen in the FCC 2005 decision to enforce non-discrimination against a small ISP (p. 35). Another example is the BT admission that, under its 'fair use' policy of the Option 1 broadband package, it has been throttling BBC and Google YouTube services by cutting video streaming from 8 Mbps to 896 Kbps between 5pm and midnight, which is claimed to be sufficient to watch BBC iPlayer yet nothing else concurrently (p.93). This brings

up another concern over overtly anti-competitive behaviour, which includes price squeezing and gouging, in the middle mile or backhaul by large ISPs and refusal to deal by backbone owners (p. 90). Such 'negative' discrimination, which raises anti-trust issues, not only affects the economic interests of content and application providers, but also those of other ISPs connected to a complex web of networks. Caught in this multi-sided market, consumer interest in and right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to access content and to use applications legally available online, is also undermined.

Even in the case of 'positive' discrimination by charging for a better quality of service, Economides (2011) points out that such attempt may not be socially optimal and would also undermine the social welfare value, which, according to Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003 p.182), is another component in addition to the economic welfare value that constitutes the public interest. Such 'positive' discrimination, if imposed, would not only distort a well-functioning market in the network transport circle, but also that of content and application (Economides 2011 p.11). If adopted, this practice would trigger broadband providers to charge smaller ISPs, with which they do not have contractual relationships, for peering or carrying their traffic (backhaul problem) as well as the content and applications providers that are the clients of those ISPs, resulting in social welfare loss in many ways (p. 11). These social welfare losses include that of innovation in the content and applications layers (Lessig 2006, Lessig 2002) and the loss of quality of diversity of content and applications (Baker 2002) because both price and non-price discrimination may incur too much cost to content and application providers to offer the service. This situation may result in them exiting the market. Given such consequences, the number of players in the market will decrease to include only a range of players with significant capital. This, in turn, may also lead to greater market concentration in the content and application layers and thus limited choice for consumers.

According to Economides (2011 pp.8-15), the two-sidedness of the market that appears to provide incentives and rationale for charging a positive price to a third party content and application provider does not imply an automatic price reduction to consumers or end-users, but would result in economic welfare loss to the consumer side (end-users) which would have direct consequences on social welfare. This is because a positive price imposed on a third-party content and application provider increases cost on the content and application provider side. Such additional cost would be very difficult for the providers either to recover from broadband end-users across the board or to add new fees to their services as few content and application providers have contractual relationships with residential customers. This may result in content and application providers with smaller financial reserves leaving the market, leaving fewer choices for consumers. Moreover, a number of the less financially powerful content and application providers may be among those providing 'merit good' content. Therefore, such an economic welfare loss is likely to result in a sub-

sequent social welfare loss. In the absence of net neutrality and the consequent discrimination, end-user interests in receiving not only information of their choice, but also information that carries important public good or value that enables individuals to perform their duties as responsible citizens in a democratic society (Barendt 2005 pp.25-30) may be limited to that which the remaining players deem most profitable. This potential market concentration also encroaches on the interests of imparting information of content and application providers. Such economic welfare loss in the supposed absence of net neutrality and regulatory intervention would constitute welfare loss. Either way, consumers, with a civic right to freedom of expression, face both economic and social welfare loss.

Additionally, there is no guarantee that network operator and ISP profits from imposing price discrimination on content and application providers will be spent on upgrading network capacity. Based on the economy of scale and large sunk cost, network operators and ISPs may be inclined to keep or create congestion on the network in order to advance their cause for continued price discrimination to extract more profit from prioritisation (Economides 2011 pp.18-19). This also results in social welfare loss because the 'innovation within the network' may be dwarfed in order to allow congestion to persist and, since network capacity, to a degree, defines the type and richness of content and applications exchanged over the network (Noam 2008 p.5), such condition will also harm innovation at the edge of the network as well. Moreover, prioritisation also implies a potential end-user privacy breach as a form of deep-packet inspection or packet sniffing will be required in order to monitor and prioritise traffic.

Finally, according to an analysis by Economides (2011 pp.20-21), the exclusive deal between the 'last mile' access and content and application providers may allow network providers and ISPs to select the winners on the content and application side of the market. These winners are likely to be those with the deepest pockets and not necessarily those with the best quality content or applications. Such a situation deprives consumers of a diversity of choice as content and application providers may limit their production to those they view as profitable to minimise costs and increase chances of recovering the cost of carriage from end-user attention. This has direct consequences on the social and political welfare values (prescribing freedom, diversity, quality and public accountability) underpinning public interest as described by Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003 pp.182-185). Such a situation would also undermine the freedom of expression of speakers, the audience, the public and their interest in exchanging not only the information and views of their choice, but also information that carries important public good or value that enables individuals to perform their duties as responsible citizens in a democratic society (Barendt 2005 pp.25-30). These principles and values have long served as guidelines in practice on the content side of today's convergence of telecom and content and, according to Noam (2010 p.8), more mass media is mi-

grating to the advancing telecommunication networks and, along with this migration, the "societal media policy goal" follows. This implies these conflicts of interest among network operators, ISPs and content and application providers can no longer be treated as a competition issue within the network circle as competition alone will not be sufficient to achieve other societal goals or sustain the political and social welfare values underpinning the public interest (Marsden 2010). Moreover, this convergence of telecom and content, together with the nature of content exchanged on the network, raises the possibility of regulatory dilemmas (Garnham 1996a, Garnham 1996b).

Based on the evidence and analysis presented, the consequences of the absence of network neutrality can be severe and damaging not only to rival businesses, but also to consumers and the public as their interests and civic rights may be undermined by both price and non-price discrimination in the absence of network neutrality. Given the importance of the Internet as a dynamic platform for communications and commerce in virtually every economic welfare loss as a result of the absence of net neutrality, there is social welfare at stake. For these reasons, despite an emerging consensus that discrimination or prioritisation measures may be tolerated given legitimate cause and scope (Marsden 2010 p.55), both sides of the Atlantic recognise the importance of the openness of the Internet and therefore support net neutrality as reflected in their policy and regulatory responses (European Commission 2011 p.3).

Net neutrality: A pro-market policy and regulatory response?

As a public policy issue, net neutrality is a complex one, involving at least two key policy areas, telecommunications and content services, including mainly broadcasting (Garnham 1996b pp.284-287). The first challenge, according to Garnham (1996b p.284), is the difference in regulatory criteria on which each previously distinct policy/regulatory area is based: economic criteria for telecommunications and political and cultural criteria for broadcasting. Now that the two are interconnected, policy/regulation of the network and content has become inseparable since both are based on the control over distribution or delivery of content or services (p.284). Yet the typical practitioner's recommendation for the application of a competition-based approach across the board is, according to Marsden (2010 p.46), doomed to fail without a structural change in these two previously distinct sectors. This complexity, which future policy needs to reflect, results from a multitude of vested interests in the Internet as a new communication platform. With the extended value chain of the converging industries, telecoms and content, there are more players involved, each with different and often competing interests.

Concerning policy objectives, the US and the UK/EU appear to share the same approach, preferring a light reg-

ulatory touch and an ex post facto approach to state intervention, favouring competition and transparency of network management practices and quality of service for consumers (European Commission 2011, OFCOM 2011, Federal Communications Commission 2010). This reflects the global spread of neo-liberal doctrine which resulted in waves of marketisation in the policy landscape affecting rules (Hesmondhalgh 2007 pp.105-136), regulation and market outcome in both the telecommunication and content part of today's information network. Despite the influence of neo-liberal doctrine on contemporary policy and policy-making, the market conditions in each country, the US and the UK (as part of the EU), remain subject to their different policy/regulatory traditions, the former with a pro-market approach while the latter shows a greater tendency toward a harmonized approach. As a result, measures taken and the extent of state intervention applied to ensure such a position may differ in detail, although the pro-market US and welfarist EU now share the same approach to net neutrality in that the Internet, or at least part of it, should continue to serve as an open platform that contributes to citizen enjoyment and respects fundamental rights, including both freedom of expression and freedom to conduct business (European Commission 2011 p.3, Federal Communications Commission 2005 pp.2-3).

Both the 'positive' and 'negative' elements of discrimination (Marsden 2010 p.29) that constitute the net-neutrality debate have been addressed on the supranational and national levels through EU directives and in the new US rules on transparency and clarification of types of blocking allowed for both fixed and mobile broadband (OFCOM 2011 p.11). In 2005, Congress announced its national Internet policy in section 230(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 as amended by the Telecommunications Act 1996 that the US has a policy to "preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet" and "to promote the continued development of the Internet". In section 706(a) of the Act, the FCC is charged with "encourag[ing] the deployment on a reasonable and timely basis of an advanced telecommunication capability" (broadband) "to all Americans". By virtue of the Act, the FCC, the US regulator, has proposed three net neutrality rules: prescribing a transparency requirement as a means to promote competition throughout the Internet ecosystem, a ban on blocking or unreasonable discrimination and a requirement of reasonable network management to aid the transparency requirement in terms of types of network management practices consistent with open Internet protection that may apply (Federal Communications Commission 2010 pp.32-51). These rules have yet to be enacted (OFCOM 2011 p.11). As for the EU stance, which also guides the UK, the changes made by the EU Directives 2009/140/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25th November 2009 on Directives 2002/21/EC on the common regulatory framework for electronic communication networks and services (which forms part of the Telecommunications Package) in Article 8(4)(g) not only reflect EU recognition of the impact

of non-net neutral practices of network operators on the interests of both citizens and consumers, but also promote the interests of citizens of the EU. The Article clearly states the EU, and thus the UK, consumer protection view in the net neutrality approach by "promoting the ability of end-users to access and distribute information or run applications and services of their choice" (Directives 2001/21/EC, Article 8(4)(g) as amended by the Directives 2009/140/EC). It also provides the authority for national regulators to take necessary actions to achieve this objective, as prescribed in Article 20 of the Universal Service Directive. Article 21 of the same directive sets out specific minimum transparency requirements for network operators to enable consumers to make informed decisions when choosing their Internet access service and enable regulators to promote self- or co-regulatory measures prior to imposing any new obligations on the network providers, if deemed necessary. Moreover, in order to prevent both the degradation of service and traffic delays over the network, regulators can impose minimum quality of service obligations on communication providers under the authority of Article 22(3) of the Universal Service Directive as amended by the Directives 2009/140/EC.

As can be seen from the approach to net neutrality as seen in the US Internet policy and the three rules recently adopted by the FCC as well as the EU welfarist harmonization approach to net neutrality, there is an emphasis on competition, a classic market mechanism. Even the emerging consumer welfare aspect (Marsden 2010 p.55), as a new policy objective through transparency promotion, is linked to competition, as is evident in the FCC description of the function of the 'transparency' rule in relation to competition (Federal Communications Commission 2010 pp.32-51) and the EU objective for preserving and promoting the openness of the Internet prescribed in Article 8(4)(g) of the revised Framework Directive (European Commission 2011 p.3, Federal Communications Commission 2005 pp.2-3). Moreover, the ex post facto approach to state intervention in case of discrimination constituting anti-trust issues and encroachment on the interests and civic rights of consumers adopted on both sides of the Atlantic implies a degree of hegemonic pro-market approach to provision of information services.

As mentioned earlier, such an approach may owe its roots to the global spread of neo-liberal doctrine (Harvey 2007, Hesmondhalgh 2007), resulting in a series of marketisation strategies across the policy landscape, affecting rules, regulation and market outcomes. This strong influence of neo-liberal market logic, enhanced by globalization (Harvey 2007) means even the welfarist EU has to accommodate this logic as seen in, for example, the limit of provision for funding of public service broadcasting to the extent that such funding "does not affect trading conditions and competition in the Community" in the Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty of the European Community-Protocol on the system of public broadcasting in member states (11997D/PRO/09). The condition prescribed in the Trea-

ty reflects the EU harmonization approach, one that tries to accommodate through market mechanism both public and private interests. As to which interest is prioritized remains subject to interpretation on a case-by-case basis. As part of the EU, the UK Communications Act 2003 reflects the same approach when describing Ofcom's principle duties as a convergent regulator:

to further the interests of citizens in relation to communication matters; and

to further the interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate, by promoting competition

However, it is worth noting that both the "interests of citizens" (public interest) "in relation to communication matters", which also include the interests of citizens in accessing content and applications of their choice as well as those that carry important public good or value that enables individuals to perform their duties as responsible citizens in a democratic society (Barendt 2005 pp.25-30) via an IP network, is placed in a higher order than the interests of consumers to be catered to by the market and optimized by competition. Even so, such priority may differ in practice and thus other values (the political and social welfare values) underpinning public interest other than the economic value (Van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003 pp.182-185), which is upheld by a pro-market approach (competition), may not be equally warranted.

In the context of today's convergence of carriage and content (as well as applications), a competition-based approach still applies (more so in the US) and remains the central purpose of net-neutrality rules even though, as Marsden (2010) points out, competition alone is not sufficient to address all the issues stemming from the conflict of competing interests in the market. Even the emerging consumer protection angle in contemporary Internet and net-neutrality policy reflects the influence of the hegemonic market logic since the consumer is part of the market. Moreover, according to Economides (2011), it is the market failure due to the lack of competition or insufficient amount of competition and players with significant market presence that now justifies state intervention through net-neutrality regulation.

Conclusion: pro-market approaches are not challenged, while political and social welfare values are

As discussed earlier, issues underpinning the net-neutrality debate are defined in market terms as "pricing and cost recovery, and potentially problems of discrimination" (Sidak 2007 p.377). Yet, they have direct consequences for both private and public interests (Economides 2011). Understandably, the logical immediate policy and regulatory response would be the hegemonic market-based one, which may not be sufficient to address and resolve other problems undermining other combinations of values supporting public interests (political and social welfare values). As evident in the latest policy response to preserve and promote the openness of the Internet, the key objective guiding this policy is to

promote competition which then contributes to a well functioning market.

Therefore, based on the above review and an analysis of the literature on net neutrality and relevant policy document, it is noted that net neutrality as both policy issue and objective (in response to concerns over the detrimental impact of its absence) does not pose any challenge to the hegemonic pro-market approach to the provision of information services. It is, in fact, a by-product of the market as a result of stakeholder conflict of interests and the market's inability to optimally provide for such services. Attempts to maintain net neutrality and thus safeguard the openness of the Internet are also driven by classic market mechanisms and logic.

However, competition cannot solve every problem fueling the on-going net-neutrality debate; neither can a combination of competition and the emerging consumer protection angle because the consumer aspect is also part of hegemonic market logic and approach to, in this case, the provision of information services. As Marsden (2010) and Garnham (1996b) point out, a competition-based approach as an overarching response to convergence of carriage (telecom) and content is bound to fail without structural changes in the relevant sectors. Part of this failure may have resulted from the nature of free market competition that, as Curran (2002), Harvey (2007) and McChesney (2003) noted, often results in a monopoly and consequently restricts citizen and consumer choices to the range of what the market sees as most profitable.

Although the current policy and regulatory approaches may be able to tackle some of the problems undermining the interest of the public concerning access to and use of content and applications online, they may not be sufficient to protect and promote other interests of the public, such as freedom, diversity, quality and public accountability prescribed by social and political welfare values as described by Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003 pp. 182-185). Some of these values are recognized as the core principles supporting policy for media, as identified by Freedman (2008 p.54); in fact, they now occupy a huge amount of space on the information network. The most difficult one to address is the quality of diversity. In the context of the net-neutrality debate, the availability of diverse content and content services is not an issue on the open Internet as a multimedia and convergent communication platform, provided that access is guaranteed and the quality of service is sufficient to view such content. The quality of diversity (Baker 2002 p.299) due to the 'public good' quality of much of the content available on the Internet, which resembles that of traditional broadcast content (Hitchens 2006) increasingly being carried to viewers via the Internet. However, this is another issue concerning political and social welfare values that has been raised in the net-neutrality debate. To respond properly to this policy issue requires further research into both the internal dynamics among stakeholders in the extensive value chain of the two converging sectors, telecommunications and content and applications, as they seek to defend and promote their interests as well as their

roles in the contemporary pluralistic policy-making process.

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Mediator or arbitrator? The role of online media platforms in labeling the Ottoman-Armenian "genocide"

Nukte Ogun

University of Western Sydney. Email: 15951029@student.uws.edu.au

Technological advancements in the new millennium, particularly the development of Web 2.0 platforms, support the dissemination of emotive exchanges that ignore empirical evidence and have the potential to create an "other" – an enemy. Arguably, such discourses can spread to parliamentary debates, which often mirror constituent concerns. The struggle to label the deaths of Ottoman-Armenians in the early twentieth century as "genocide" is one example. The label "genocide" has emerged even in geographically distant Australian parliamentary discussions. The struggle to use and refuse such terms is deeply felt by Armenian and Turkish migrant communities, for each of which the reframing is a question of cultural identity and a source of tension. The opening of communication channels may, ironically, become what stifles freedom of expression. Former French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, motivated by constituents' communications, made 2012 the year denying an "Armenian genocide" became a criminal offence. This bill was passed in the name of human rights, in ignorance of a simple fact; freedom of speech is one of the most basic rights, according to French Constitutional foundations. This restrictiveness, however, was not long lived; the French Constitutional Court quashed the bill within 37 days. Yet the ripples of this bill spread around the globe. This paper documents an account of Australian media responses to the Sarkozy Government's bill. Furthermore, it asks if online and social media networks are portals for democratic discourse or arbitrators handing down verdicts. This study analyses interactions across four online platforms – Australian mainstream press, Australian-Armenian and Australian-Turkish local ethnic press, and blogs – in the year preceding and the month following the "Armenian genocide denial bill". It considers how the contentious debate spread across the globe, from parliament to parliament, and how it created stigmatised "others", with a decreased sense of belonging. It is not the purpose of this paper to determine a label for the deaths of Ottoman-Armenians from 1915 to 1916. As such, throughout this paper, the event in question is referred to as "X".

Introduction

The development of Web 2.0 has changed the manner in which information is disseminated. The removal of barriers to communication is not, however, without consequences. With no restraints on communication, language can be used to reframe history and even justify war. Technology and media advancements have altered cultural and social relations, affecting the construction of national identities and decreasing sense of belonging. The use of the term "belonging" in this paper refers specifically to the sense of belonging to the nation of residence, experienced by individuals of an ethnic-migrant background. Australia was formerly "immune" to international influences due to its geographically remote location, however, globalisation has increased the media's presence in politics (Jupp 2003). International agendas can make their way into the Australian domain and influence political narratives with ease.

Language devices have played a substantial role in shaping debates surrounding the deaths of Ottoman-Armenians from 1915 to 1916. Historians, political actors and media members give facts life; they choose, analyse and interpret. Moreover, Hallett explains "individual interpretations, unavoidably, are fated to be biased" (1961, p.25). Such arguments are capable of creating conflicting and reductive discussions between those of differing cultural backgrounds.

This paper assesses how journalism across online and social media platforms can be reductive in nature and result in the degradation of contentious debates. Journalists are not commonly expected to dig through archives or dedicate themselves to scholarly research, citizen journalists even less so; that is normally considered to be the role of the historian. Media members instead often quote political actors. Consequently, off-the-cuff comments can be broadcast as "absolute reality" (Tanner 2002).

Many contentious labels have been assigned to describe the deaths of Ottoman-Armenians from 1915 to 1916; genocide, civil war, tragedy and event are merely a few. Conflicting narratives surround the events of this period, and it is not the purpose of this paper to determine a label for the date in question. As such, throughout this paper, the deaths from 1915 to 1916 are referred to simply as "X".

Throughout this paper, the term "political actors" will be in reference to politically active "agents" capable of sculpting messages and communicating themes to audiences. This includes lobbyists and

government spokespeople, alongside elected members of parliament.

Articles and interactions across online news media platforms were analysed in order to consider if contentious international debates are degraded in Australia due to an online presence. Empirical data was collected from mainstream Australian newspapers, *The Australian, The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as Australian-Turkish local newspaper *Yeni Vatan,* and Australian-Armenian local newspaper *Armenia Online*. Items in these publications were deemed relevant if they contained the necessary key words and phrases, including "genocide", "civil war", "1915 to 1916" and "genocide recognition".

Similarly, blogs pertaining to "X" were reviewed; however, none were found in Australia that focused completely on "X". The heated discussions that take place whenever "X" is mentioned in Australia are not currently being transferred to the blogosphere. It was realised early in the data collection period that regular online discussions in Australia, in regards to "X", take place in the comment forums following news stories instead. Consistent discussions on social media platforms, such as blogs and facebook, are rare and not what Australian users predominantly employ these platforms for. For this reason, the articles and comments published on online news portals became the focus of this paper. Having said that, *Armenian Genocide Blog,* published in America, was still reviewed in order to give an indication of the role blogs play in influencing political discussions and national identity. A blog focusing on "X", written by a Turkish migrant, was not found and therefore a comparison cannot be offered.

The analysed content was restricted from January 1, 2011 to February 29, 2012. This period encapsulates the Sarkozy Government's attempts to make denial of the alleged "Armenian genocide" a criminal offence; from the passing of the bill in the French Senate to the quashing of the bill by the Constitutional Court. This period saw a spike in coverage of "X" and heightened tensions. The findings provide a summary of the disseminated tense narratives and the consequential comments. The data collected on ensuing comments illustrates the resulting effects of said narratives on migrant communities. This study indicates instances where online platforms played the role of the mediator, opening a portal for discussion, and instances where such platforms were an arbitrator, handing down judgements.

Historical background

Literature regarding "X" is vastly controversial, and this paper will not hazard an opinion as to what may or may not be a just label. It instead examines how the development of online news and social platforms is hastening the spread of the "genocide" label.

It should be noted that, despite having many contradictory aspects, the great majority of narratives agree on the fundamentals—that many Ottoman-Armenians were re-located by the Ottoman-Turks during World War I, amidst the Ottoman Government's fears of revolutionaries cooperating with the Russian invaders of Eastern Anatolia to seize Ottoman cities, and that it was the civilians who perished in WWI crossfire and during relocation. Yet, there are great discrepancies between the final labels assigned (Suny 2009; McCarthy 2005). For decades, political actors from the Armenian and Turkish Governments have spun nationalistic tales, neither tale complimentary to reconciliation. These tales are now spreading via the web, appearing everywhere from public meetings to parliamentary discourses.

It is not uncommon for political actors to bend to constituent desires; desires which are communicated with ease in the Web 2.0 era. Political actors wishing to maintain power must be attentive to the petitions and lobbies presented by their constituents (Lasswell 1976). Still, the Sarkozy Government received heavy criticism for raising the "genocide denial bill". Critics claimed the bill was merely a ploy to secure the votes of the 500,000 Armenians residing in France. Interestingly, the claims that the Sarkozy Government's party politics were being moulded around constituent discussions was not denied. "That is democracy", said Valerie Boyle, the Sarkozy Government senator who wrote the bill. Boyle explained it is the duty of politicians to pass the bills their constituents lobby for (Dilorenzo 2012). However, providing all constituents with a voice is impossible; there will undoubtedly be differing opinions. Frequently, it is the minorities who are left unheeded (Lasswell 1976).

One-sided representations in political forums and the media can decrease sense of belonging, this is particularly the case in regards to "X" and the "genocide denial bill". With the use of a few carefully selected terms, political actors are able to present those with opposing views as the "other"—an enemy (Servaes and Lie 1997; Meyrowitz 1986; Terzis 2008). Actors suggest to the target audience that the "other" threatens security, cannot be reasoned with, and requires elimination (Servaes and Lie 1997; Terzis 2008). This same technique was employed by the Nazi German media to influence public opinion towards the "evil" Jewish people (Goldhagen 1996).

Setting agendas and creating labels

Political actors can employ a host of techniques to create a dominant view. Agenda-setting is one such technique; high volumes of coverage increase attention and can lead to the subsequent creation of an agenda (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007). However agenda-setting does not have a life of its own. If it is used to raise issues, it is done so because there are journalists, political actors and social networks that deem these issues to be significant (Gamson & Modigliani 1987). The constant barrage of images and sound-bites communicated to media audiences results in "strong, long-term effects" (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007, p.10).

The development of Web 2.0 platforms has increased the speed and scope of information dissemination, arguably increasing agenda-setting capabilities. The Australian-Armenian press' interactive media presence is a noteworthy example. *Armenia Weekly* launched the internet version of its weekly newspaper, *Armenian Online,* in 2009 (Armenia Online 2011). The website claims to deliver news to more Armenian-Australians than any other publication, granted it has few rivals in Australia. The articles are published in both English and Armenian, making the site accessible to the wider Australian public. The website publishes its own content, as well as content from other sources. It also uploads audio and video files, delivers an e-newsletter, hosts an Armenian-Australian business directory and announcements page, facilitates petitions, uses tags and provides readers with the means to comment on articles. *Armenia Online* published 228 articles referring specifically to an "Armenian genocide" during the data collection period. Of these articles, 10 percent focused on the French Government's stance. Not a single one of the articles described "X" as anything other than "genocide". *Armenia Online* presented a clear message; it considers "X" to be an act of "genocide" and supports the French Senate bill.

During the same time period, a total of 27 articles regarding "X" were written in the reviewed Australian mainstream publications; six in the *Sydney Morning Herald,* five in the *Age,* and 16 in *The Australian.* Of the *Sydney Morning Herald* articles, 50 percent described "X" as "genocide"; of the *Age* articles, over 30 percent described "X" as "genocide", and 40 percent of the articles in *The Australian* described "X" as "genocide". The remaining articles described "X" and referred to the use of the "genocide" label by others, however did not employ the label. Of the stories that described "X" as "genocide", three were profile features, five were opinion pieces, and only one was a news story. It can be assumed that the writers who described "X" as "genocide" were doing so based on their personal biases or those of their interviewees; only one instance in which the label was used was a "hard news story".

In comparison, in this period, Turkish weekly newspaper, *Yeni Vatan*, published only 28 articles relevant to this study. Attempts to label "X" were not prominent; the focal point of the articles instead was the denial of "genocide" accusations. Of these articles, 68 percent were reactions to the Sarkozy Government's "genocide denial bill". *Yeni Vatan* also presented a clear message; it does not consider "X" to be an act of "genocide" and does not support the "genocide denial bill". The bill was described as supporting "genocide claims" and "genocide lies". However, due to sheer numbers alone, *Armenia Online* has a much stronger agenda-setting capability. Having said this, it is important to note that there is minimal overlap in readership across the Armenian and Turkish local publications, and unavailability of circulation data limits the study.

Yeni Vatan's agenda-setting capability is also weaker in comparison because the newspaper does not utilise the Web 2.0 functions *Armenia Online* does. *Yeni Vatan* is uploaded as a pdf, making the process of accessing articles of interest a laborious task, and the website is not search engine optimised. *Yeni Vatan* is published only in Turkish, making it inaccessible to the wider Australia community, limiting its agenda-setting ability to only those who read Turkish. Importantly, it does not offer a comments or posts function. As such, the site lacks the ability to facilitate discussions and influence agendas. Furthermore, due to the reactive nature or its articles, it can be argued even less would have been written about "X" was it not for the "genocide denial bill" and coverage of "X" by other publications.

Armenian Genocide Blog published 26 posts in the nominated period, 23 percent of which were specifically related to the French "genocide denial bill". A further 3 percent discussed the predominant French stance in general. In the three years the blog has been running it has developed a base of 49 followers. In terms of agenda-setting, its capability is minimal with so few readers. However, the blog uses the available technologies well; it is search engine optimised and may develop a larger follower base in the coming years, particularly because it is open to contributions via a comment tool.

Members of the media play a key role in persuading societies to "negotiate" in a specific manner (Allan & Zelitzer 2004; Bond 2005; Terzis 2003; Terzis 2008). The media has the ability to become what Fredric Jameson recognised as the "political unconscious"; building an individual's "understanding" of events, on a national and international scale, and influencing the parameters of discussions surrounding social change (Mander 1999, p.3).

The successful use of agenda-setting also requires the precise employment of labels, which is rare for Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and a contributing factor to the country's shortcomings in internationally distributing labels. Erdogan, and his predecessors, have employed numerous terms over the years, rather than the one absolute term, such as "genocide", creating a whole host of perspectives. Such terms, more often than not, have been reactive.

Following resolutions in the United States and Sweden to describe the deaths of Ottoman-Armenians as "genocide", Erdogan stated Turkey was turning a "blind eye" to 100,000 illegal Armenian immigrants. "Tomorrow, I may tell these 100,000 to go back to their country, if it becomes necessary" (BBC 2010). The statement merely exemplified how the Prime Minister employs empty intimidation techniques and acts reactively. Similarly, the coverage of "X" in *Yeni Vatan* was also reactive, a noteworthy trend. Of the articles published referring to "X", 75 percent were written in reaction to an organised event or a comment made by the Armenian Government, Armenian diaspora, or other "genocide recognisers". In comparison, more than 50 percent of the articles published by *Armenia Online* were pre-emptive stories, which showed "support" for "genocide recognition", effectively defining what the debate would be about.

Pre-emptive messages are crucial to perception management. By seizing the initiative, political actors can sculpt messages to suit their own agenda; forcing their opposition into a reactive position, where they are forced to defend their actions, or at least to join a debate where the central issue has already been defined. Thus, the Turkish press was not "forced" to adopt any particular view of "X", but it was under great pressure to have something to say about "X", once others began putting forth their viewpoints. Arguably, once the seeds of an idea have been planted in a timely manner, herd mentality takes over. Herd mentality refers to large numbers of people behaving in the same way, influencing each other. Herds are greatly susceptible to initial suggestion, which is the "cement" of the herd (Trotter, 1921). With Web 2.0, ideas spread instantly, infecting the masses and manipulating social outcomes.

In regards to managing perceptions regarding "X", Turkey has been reacting for decades. Following World War I, Turkey was preoccupied with post-war reconstruction and the assembly of the new republic. Consequently, the administration was not the first to set forth a label describing "X". Furthermore, it was slow in responding to "genocide" accusations. The result was a simplification of the issue into "victims and villains" (McCarthy 1996). Responding in a timely manner is critical to effective crisis and perception management. A political actor who seizes the initiative, and supplies the first acceptable representation, is capable of swaying swinging audiences to a particular side (Huang & Su 2009). It is apparent from the collected data that the Turkish Government is still not practicing strategic political communication. Had it not been for factors such as timeliness and herd mentality, the framing of "X" may have greatly differed, as would the popularly accepted version of events. This, however, is not to say the differing version would not again have been a simplification of "X" into "victims" and "villains". In the current day, governments use Web 2.0 platforms to label "X" in order to relieve their people and governments of any guilt. Yet this move creates an "other", which feels removed from society.

Shattering of the cultural mosaic

Narratives surrounding "X" produce no small amount of stigma. The stigmatised person is seen as less than human and discriminated against, which can effectively endanger their life (Goffman 1963, p.3). Numerous Turks and Armenians have been threatened, and even killed, for voicing their opinions too loudly; the murder of journalist Hrant Dink by a fanatical Turkish nationalist is only one example. Dink, a prominent Armenian-Turk, often advocated reconciliation and was critical of "genocide" denial in *Agos,* the bi-lingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper of which he was editor-in-chief (Christensen 2007).

The stigma that occurs following "X" debates results in protests, the defacement of monuments and even threats of deportation (The Australian 2011; Armenia Online 2011; BBC 2010), actions which have consequences for both Armenian and Turkish migrants. Ten such instances of disruptions to social cohesion were reported by *Armenia Online* within the data collection period, two were reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and three were reported by *The Australian.* In each instance, a shifting of blame was attempted; the stigmatised fought to stigmatise another. As previously mentioned, the majority of articles in *Yeni Vatan* were reactive and consequently did not cover social outbursts – instances of unrest, most often in the form of protests and derogatory online posts, such as those that took place in relation to the "genocide denial bill". Similarly, it did not cover resulting instances of stigma. None of the posts in *Armenian Genocide blog* referred to such social outbursts.

Multiple emotive outbursts were posted as comments on online news forums following articles regarding "X". During the data collection period, 63 comments were posted in response to *Armenia Online* articles on "X". Of these comments, 29 were identified to be disparaging as they contained derogatory words. Two of these derogatory comments were posted by members of the Australian-Turkish community and were directed at the Australian-Armenian community. An example includes; "For all u armenian assyrian n greek f&$%s. Using the australian government for your racist hissy fits is pretty childish and i dare anyone of you guys to go up to a turk and say what you have to say to our face. You know where our community is. Bring it on." (Turk 101 2011) The rest were written by members of the Australian-Armenian community and directed at the Australian-Turkish community. One example is; "I would suggest that you migrate directly to HELL where a lot of your ignorant kind already exist. And 'bon voyage'." (Hovannessian 2012) Such negative discussions serve only to disintegrate social cohesion. The spread of negative discourses on Web 2.0 platforms can arguably create a decreased sense of belonging within ethnic-migrant Australian communities and become a detriment to multiculturalism as a normative concept.

Similar discussions of "X" took place in the Australian mainstream press. Two comments were made in response to an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and one was made in response to an article in *The Australian.* All three comments, made following feature articles, referred to the Turkish community, in Australia and beyond. All three carried negative connotations and referred to Turkish denial and revisionism; "The inclusion of the phrase "what is known as" is superfluous. Let there be no doubt about the Armenian Genocide in 1915. It happened." (General Antanik 2011)

Comments were not made in response to *Yeni Vatan* articles as the newspaper's site does not support such a function. Instead, members of the Australian-Turkish community were able to express their opinions by way of columns. Of the 28 articles written, nine were columns that served this purpose. The columns too carried negative connotations, in regards to the Armenian community; they also called upon members of the Australian-Turkish community to "defend" themselves against

"genocide lies", by educating and protesting (Yormaz 2011, p.9). The columnists wrote under the assumption their view of "X" was definitive and did not leave room for other considerations. In comparison, 50 percent of the posts on *Armenian Genocide blog* contained offensive comments towards Turkey and the Turkish Government, such as "Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's latest sinister threat" (Jordan 2011).

According to the undisputed historical record, Armenians and Turks have interacted a great deal. However, their senses of Armenian or Turkish ethnicity tend to highlight different accounts of that interaction, and they now have vastly different interpretations of "X". The resulting reductive arguments prevent the acceptance of multiculturalism as a normative concept; however this diversity of historical memory makes multiculturalism all that much more necessary.

With so much discussion in Australia regarding "X" – in parliaments and ethnic communities – it is surprising that these discussions did not make their way into the blogosphere. Is this because users see social media platforms as a way to create their identity and do not merely want to show one aspect of their lives? Or do users believe the issue is too heavy to be discussed on platforms which are considered "social"? It could be either of these reasons, or a myriad of others. This paper cannot provide an answer for the listed questions; however, it is an avenue that can be travelled in future research projects.

Conclusion

Web 2.0 environments are increasing the rates at which labels are dispersed. The contentious labels used to describe "X" are travelling as far as Australia and entering its political sphere more so than ever before. It can be assumed increased media coverage, whether it is prepared by political actors or citizen journalists, increases constituent awareness and affects parliamentary discourses. With few barriers to online communication, the exchanges can be emotive and absent of empirical evidence. Having said this, the level of influence on parliamentary discourses is still debatable. Regardless of the messages disseminated from lobby groups, the French Constitutional Court overturned the decision to make denial of an "Armenian genocide" illegal. With such bodies acting as watchdogs, it appears the power of the media and online platforms can be reined in, though whether this is the duty of such bodies is another debate altogether. At times, debates regarding contentious international issues are degraded, as seen by the comments left after online news articles and on the reviewed blog. Such negative discourses can create an "other", an outsider who is seen as an enemy.

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