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What will be the face of Citizen into the online world?

Ricardo Nicola[1]

ABSTRACT
Although the constitution of Internet could be a theme just enough explored by cyber social researches, the subject, however, have emerged and manifested itself as a vast terrain in order to generate a tense investigations from the applied social sciences, and, in special, the communication - which make it possible to reveal cyber citizenship concept. So, it intends to point out what are the main variables that help the comprehension of hypermedia phenomena from, and, nevertheless, present in the web. As presented before through my others articles, these variables are categorized as net in convergence that, nowadays, summed into six of it, which are net of symbols (signs), languages, nations, communities, markets, and machines; and in this article they will be highlighted and explored as important paths to verify and understand as online citizenship constitutes itself in the digital communication arena which it is no more identified as a result of the fragmented system, but the own system.

Key Words: internet; cyber citizenship; information society; digital media; cyber social behavior; virtual community.

RESUMO
Ainda que a constituição da Internet possa parecer um tema já bastante explorado pelas pesquisas cibersociais, o assunto, contudo, tem emergido e se manifestado como um terreno vasto para gerar intensas investigações das ciências sociais aplicadas, e, em especial, da comunicação - tendo como papel de destaque, o jornalismo digital - e que vem possibilitando rever o conceito da cibercidadania. Assim, pretende-se apontar quais as principais variáveis que auxiliam na compreensão dos fenômenos hipermidiáticos oriundos e, todavia, presentes na web. Como outrora apresentadas em outros artigos de minha autoria, tais variáveis estão categorizadas como redes em convergência que, na atualidade, totalizam-se em seis, sendo elas: redes de símbolos (signos), línguas, nações, comunidades, mercados e máquinas; e, que neste artigo, serão mais bem destacadas e exploradas como importantes atalhos para averiguar e compreender como se constitui a cidadania on-line nas arenas da comunicação digital, nas quais ela não é mais apenas percebida como fruto de um sistema fragmentário, mas o próprio sistema.

Palavras-chave: Internet; cibercidadania; jornalismo digital; mídias digitais; comportamento cibersocial; comunidade virtual.

RESUMEN
Aunque la constitución de Internet podría ser un tema explorado lo suficiente por investigaciones *cibersociales*, el tema, sin embargo, han surgido y se manifiesta como un extenso terreno, a fin de generar una tensión de las investigaciones de las ciencias sociales

[1] Ricardo Nicola is professor at Sao Paulo State University, Unesp, Brazil. Ricardo obtained his Ph.D. in Multimedia from the Campinas State University and his Master in Communication and Visual Poetry from Unesp. During his residency at McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, UofT, Ricardo worked on project *Cyber Citizenship and Its Transcultural Speech*, funded by CAPES/Post-Doctoral Stage. He led discussions with the Media Ecology and New Democracy groups, and also presented to fellows highlights from a new book. His publications: 2004, Cyber society - who are you in the online world? In co-authorship: 2005, Public Opinion and its (im)possible relationship. email: ricardo.nicola@utoronto.ca

aplicadas, y, en especial, la comunicación - que permitan revelar la ciudadanía en el concepto cibernético. Por lo tanto, tiene la intención de señalar, ¿cuáles son las principales variables que ayuden a la comprensión de los fenómenos de *hipermedia*, y, sin embargo, presente en la *web*. Tal como se presenta antes a través de mis otros artículos, estas variables se clasifican como rede en la convergencia que, en la actualidad, resume en seis de ella, que son redes de los símbolos (signos), lenguas, naciones, comunidades, mercados, y las máquinas, y en este artículo se destacó como importante y explorar caminos para verificar en línea y comprender como la ciudadanía se constituye en el ámbito de comunicación digital que no es más identificado como resultado de la fragmentación del sistema, pero el propio sistema.

Palabras claves: Internet, *ciberciudadanía*, la sociedad de la información, los medios de comunicación digitales; comportamiento *cibersocial*; comunidad virtual.

> *"Automation or cybernation deals with all the units and components of the industrial. […] since with electricity we extend our central nervous system globally, instantly interrelating every human experiences. […] We can now, by computer, deal with complex social needs with the same architectural certainty that we previously attempted in private housing. Industry as a whole has become the unit of reckoning, and so with society, politics, and education as wholes."*
>
> Marshall McLuhan

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of cyber citizenship is present everyday in our lives. We frequently access online computer systems using them in both our professional and private lives. This article intends to describe how activities in the online world are changing the way we relate to technology and to ourselves. What is the social impact of this communicational process? In other words, are there rights and duties in the online world? And if so, how do they manifest in cyberspace?

I do not intend to examine this concept in terms of cyber law theory where it had been introduced. Rather I intend to discuss it by way of communication theory - as a cutting off in this *complex theme* (Morin, 2000) through of the applied social sciences, more specifically through online grassroots journalism activity and virtual community. I propose to study cyber citizenship as embedded in the fragmented media market (URL's). I will consider the impact of cyber citizenship in cyber society with respect to the challenges it presents in the data tide – data smog on the web - and how this figures in Canadian and Brazilian.

To begin, it is necessary to understand the reason why I decided to return to the idea of cyber citizenship having done so on several occasions in the past. Being so, the research project "Cyber citizenship and its trans cultural speech – the nature of the digital ecosystem in

question" (2006) has been elaborated from another project titled "Cyber citizen in the online world – challenges and (re) discoveries"(2004). Both projects were developed at the Sao Paulo State University (Unesp), Bauru campus, and University of Toronto (UofT), Toronto campus, at the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, sponsored by Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES - Brazilian Foundation).

On these projects, I could verify how difficult is to concept the online citizenship because of the gap between the studies and the reality of the online world.

Thanks to the technological experiences of the McLuhan Program and cybernetic action at the UofT campus - cities as Toronto, Calgary, and Ottawa - were the bases of my research too. Everything was investigated through the Community Access Program and Community Access Point (CAP) in order to identify the conflicts that arise from social and technological confrontation by the stirring up social-technical confront (Lévy, 2001) as a significant contribution to this issue.

The cyber citizenship theme could be large enough and excessively vast to explore the nature of this confrontation - through projects with this goal - otherwise, when you focus on it in the particular conception, which it is disengaged from the classic conception of citizenship. The non-territorial and postmodern essence (Friedrich Jameson, 1997; Jean Lyotard, 2001) of cyber identity is addressed by Sherry Turkle, in her book, "Life on the screen – identity in the age of the Internet":

> "the presence of surface over depth, of simulation over the 'real', of play over seriousness, many of the same qualities that characterize the new computer aesthetic (…) In simulation, identity can be fluid and multiple, a signifier no longer clearly points to a thing that is signified, and understanding is less likely to proceed through analysis than by navigation through virtual space."

There is no doubt that cyber citizenship achieves meaning through the sociality of cyberspace while virtual communities within that space solidify cyber identity (Anderson, 1986; Rheingold, 2003). Going on this premise, the editorial conception could change it by the (re) orientation of the more conscious user about its played rules in the digital system and the relations which it establishes with the digital world: rules and relationships in the digital world can be changed according to the user.

When I started to investigate the concept of rights and duties in cyber society, I imagined that would be the same as those in the real world; I was mistaken and many studies

on this subject had also misunderstood cyber citizenship. It is fundamentally different from real world conceptions precisely because the virtual world is different from the real world (Turkle, 1997). Although it should seem obvious, we always had the real life's vision as a base of our considerations on the virtual life, and because of it its conception. It is a mistake to assume that the virtual world is simply a mirror of real life as this presumption has led to the dilemma facing the nature of cyber citizenship.

In my Master (1997) and Doctorate (2001) studies, I explored cybernetic information and the pathways of cybernetic formation. The following is a discussion of new projects founded on the notion of online community journalism also known as grassroots journalism. My researches and I will try to define the nature of the digital ecosystem so as to "control, to adopt the mechanism of info inclusion" (Valle, 2005), and to legitimize and maintain cyber democracy.

Cyber democracy, info-inclusion, and cyber citizenship etc. are not synonymous. There are many interrelationships between each term that necessitates definition and even redefinition. The first item, "cyber citizenship and its (re) evaluation" will evaluate these issue.

1.1 *Transcultural* space as a beginning of the new frontier

During my stay in Toronto, I have found many projects about Internet in Canada involved direct or indirectly by this deep debate and as example of that is located at the UofT, campus Toronto: the Citizen Lab (www.citizenlab.org) coordinated and supervised by professor Ronald Dieper. Others similar projects exist in Canada and some of them are available and supported by Canadian government in different provinces. Projects as Community Access Program, School Net - Community Access Program at http://cap.ic.gc.ca/index.htm. [Accessed the 1st of March 2007] - and more that I will try to quote. By the way, these projects are working actively.

To understand how these digital services are working, it is necessary to check out the basis of their projects' conceptions. It is believed that the transcultural experiences can be one of their roots. What means *transcultural experiences* in this world that frontiers are always in crisis? In observing the communication revolution, it is evident that transculturality is present in the digital universe. Claude Grunitziky (2006), defines this phenomenon explaining that some individuals find ways to transcend their initial culture, in order to explore, examine and

infiltrate foreign culture. These people are 'transculturalists' and their experiences.

When we say experiences, it means that they are involved in new modes of expression in the media. They are creating language tools to identifying themselves into these systems, or rather, digital ecosystems. In concert with this mosaic of new language structures, cyber society is enriched by new ideas and information processes. Therefore, new frontiers have been created on the online world where boundaries are disappearing with space and time. This complex world demands tools that are similarly complex and able to analyze the hybrid nature (virtual and real).

1.2 Challenges and (re) discoveries

Cyberspace society faces challenges to its evolution. One of them is the inability to define the process to solve online problems like information exclusion, the digital divide, security issues, censorship… etc (Wilhelm, 2004). Diverse groups such as researchers, governments, markets and corporations around the world have provided different frameworks to analyze these issues. However, these groups remain isolated in their respective networks instead of being integrated into a hybrid network. For example, six networks mainly form Internet content: "the network of symbols (signs), languages, markets, machines, peoples and communities" (LÉVY, *Paper presented at the Congresso Educação e Tecnologia*, 2002). Solutions would arise from integration of their networks not their relative isolation.

I will try during this article to explain how the culture of emergence and language (Logan, 2000) can offer important insights into finding the integrated solution.

Software as Second Life®, iPod®, Spype®, MSN Messenger®, Orkut®, MySpace® etc, has united communities from different cultures and like a mirror reflects our own geographic space. Users are able to build and rebuild their cyber society creating a space that mimics the manners and values of real life.

At the beginning, these software programs were only kids' games or instantaneous communicators because they have based on the Role Player Games (RPG). Now they are no longer kids' games: these programs go above and beyond the limits of games creating spaces of virtual environments, media, texts, transtexts, hypertexts, etc. It is virtual life with virtual virtual rules (Turkle, *Marshal McLuhan lectures with Sherry Turkle, 28th of March* 2007) and this is where virtual duties and rights come into play.

First of all, - in relation to the meaning of the meaning in cyber world – are there new

challenges facing?

We have to deal with the problems of frontiers when discussing cyberspace otherwise we would be obfuscating the discussion of rules in cyberspace.

The third item exposes this complex mosaic of cyber relationships in order that we are able to examine how the conditions of life are reformulated in the digital space. Would the semantic web be used as a tool in the virtual life?

We can formulate and reformulate many questions regarding the impact of virtual technologies in social life, but they should address the need for an integration of various social networks.

1.3. McLuhan's Legacy: a portrait of Cyber Glocal Village.

For decades, researchers, marketers, and social scientists have written about the impact of the technology in culture and society. Many of their comments on this topic are present in their impressions about the future of our communities. Global Village, for example, is a term coined by Wyndhan Lewis in his book America and Cosmic Man (1948).

Herbert Marshall McLuhan used this term to explore the idea of how electronic mass media would change the ways we communicate globally. As a result of this shift in technology and media affecting how the tribe lives, McLuhan (1962) was inspired to write The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (McLuhan, 1962) and War and Peace in the Global Village (McLuhan, 1968). In these works, he described the impact of technology on the global community and the media:

> "the world of visual perspective is one of unified and homogeneous space. Such a world is alien to the resonating diversity of spoken words. So language was the last art to accept the visual logic of Gutenberg technology, and the first to rebound in the electric age" (McLuhan, 1968).

McLuhan's observations allow us to rethinking what is happening to the world in terms of communication. McLuhan did not see the World Wide Web arises but certainly, he predicted it. There is no doubt that his vision in this social field is a good example of communication phenomenon.

In this fourth item, I will try to outline this prediction as a matrix to figure out our cyber communities that I blend as "cyber glocal village".

During the media evolution, it has been very difficult differentiating the term globalization from glocalization as a tool for understanding the impact of media in the

ecology of meaning. However, I do enjoy quoting McLuhan and using the term media ecology that looks at the media as a media environment.

1.4 New face

We will at least be able to comprehend the new face of cyber citizen and his/her place within the digital ecosystem. The virtual physionognomy of the present user is constructed from information from cyberspace…

This article draws largely on my own empirical and theory-based arguments and positions in a number of institutions in Canada and Brazil. I have focused most of my research on transdisciplinary studies such as that have extensive cybernetic bibliography; I identified large gaps between theory and practice in the social-technological field; substantial but unequally distributed ICT resources; and a myriad of local and national programs attempting to use technology to promote social inclusion and cyber citizenship.

But, at this point, this article will intend to identify that communicational researches – based only in theories (cyber philosophy) despite the technical/practical aspects – can generate a gap between the real rights and duties of cyber citizen, that justifies in our times the increase of info-exclusion and aggressive nuances in countries especially of the third world. Online life or virtual life exemplifies McLuhan's well known quote "in the electricity age, we wear all mankind as our skin" (Ibid, 1964).

2. CYBER CITIZENSHIP AND ITS EVALUATION

If we are in the Web, automatically we are in cyberspace. Evidently, beings in cyberspace is not radically new as we have experienced growing up in this post-industrial territory and facing challenges that arise from the post industrial condition.

By the way, what kind of challenges we talking about? These challenges construct and reconstruct the concept of rights and duties in the information agora.

Before we embark on this question, it is necessary to define cyber citizenship otherwise it would be difficult to identify its effects on cyber society.

First of all, cyber citizenship is a dense concept. It defines our approaches to real life relationships and underscores how complex those relationships are. Therefore, I will analyze the concept using postulates of postmodern life that is built on a matrix of the signifier and the signified, etc (Jameson, 1998; Lyotard et al.,1999).

In general, Howard Rheingold has introduced the concept of cyber citizenship as "a social and representation contract in an informal character and non-writing" (Rheingold, 2000:19). Well, that introduction to outline the online world just will make sense when we are involved in cyber social context.

2.1 Concept: Context or / and *TransText*

When we are immersed in the digital agora, many information structures from the online environment justify the user's behavior. From this phenomenon, cyber society has found a new social paradigm.

By evoking the analogy of virtual life, Lévy describes how this behavior influences the basis of cyber citizenship as a set of techniques, of practices, of attitude, of way of thinking and value in cyberspace" (Lévy, 1995:128-9).

If you considerate the classical definition, citizenship expresses a set of rights, which give the individual the possibility of actively participating in government and people's live. Those who do not have citizenship are on the edge or excluded from social life and decision, maintained in a position of inferiority inside the social group (Dallari, 1998:14).

Jean Jacque Rousseau defines it as an accord between individuals that concede some of their rights to become citizen. The basis of the accord would be acceding to a desire, identified with the collectivity, and therefore sovereignty where the significant mark of the citizenship is between the desire of all and general desire (Rousseau, 53:1973).

In terms of information marketplace, Detouzos explains cyber citizenship as a new manufacturing ethic, and presents it through different conceptions in some cultures:

> "With its emphasis on people, was so prevalent around the world that the various national teams independently invoked a special name for it. The Swedes talked about the development of human capital. The Japanese dubbed it human ware. The French called it Toyotism. And the Americans called it new economic citizenship (Dertouzos, 213:1997)".

Apart from the market concept, cyber citizenship is implicated in the simulated spectrum. In the *realm of the simulation* (Baudrillard, 1983), many structures of language have changed considerably.

The ways in which the user expresses by texts and images would be redefined itself in every single moment into the virtual agora. We can partially justify this redefinition by the impact of the postmodern world that Jameson delineates it in his famous book "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (Jameson, 53-92: 1998).

Although a more than two decade ago, according to his conception, the postmodern world needs a new "aesthetic of cognitive mapping" (Ibid, 89;1998) and computers offer a sum of simulated matrix where this reality allows identifying.

We are looking for this cognitive mapping not only in the aesthetic field but also in the social aspects. After that aesthetic reason, now there is a survival reason; would be the digital ecosystem damaged by the market, or would not? How can cognitive mapping be applied to the online system?

In general, it is difficult to separate cyberspace into different categories[2]. (Jones, 31:1999). Cyberspace is full of hybrids data and it cannot be analyzed in fragments but only as a whole. Due to its diverse nature, cyber identities must be studied using a holistic approach.

By accepting this fact, cyber citizenship is defined a mosaic of relationships focused on locating cyber identity in the market of symbols (sign) too, or rather transtext.

Transtext consists of two words in fusion: trans comes from transdisciplinarity, and text refers to the signified and the signifier, object and subject… etc. Transtext represents dozens of automatic hypertext connections that create "a brave new world" (Huxley, 1983), or brave new online world… On contrary, that world is neither so brave nor new but in reality, this idealized online world is far from the perfect.

In the online world, the situation is not different. Metaphorically speaking, these six aspects of online identities are unique and diverse fragments that travel through the virtual space. These fragments, a digital vortex has created by the interrelationship's users. It is not an easy task to understand it.

The seeds of this vortex are sown throughout the digital system creating agoras in which the classical definition of citizenship ceases to be relevant. This realm is not fantasy but a form of hyperreality: video games, Multi-user domains, MOO etc.

In order to comprehend the no spatial and/or global society and their social and environment results, Kingwell emphasized:

> "The lesson of the Arcades, whether we are discussing the ones Benjamin depicted so lovingly in his unfinished Project or the global and even no spatial ones we occupy today, points to this: we keep thinking that we can get home by going more quickly forward or by retreating more decisively

[2] According to the author's conception of cyberspace, these questions emerge: "Should we consider the Internet an environment in itself or should we consider it a complementary part or and extension of our own environment?"

> back. And yet, the truth is that neither course will really take us where we want to go. So what will?" (Id, 174:1983)

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Perhaps this observation implies in a fresh analyze focused on the problem of boundaries and frontiers and their distinctions delineated by the border of user's speech because in the online *world words are actions* (Turkle, 2005), words are bricks of this info highway.

The perfect cyber citizenship utilizes difference as a contribution to the collective cyber consciousness. This aspect has not been readily discussed in most studies.

The online user profile is not a stranger, but its vulnerabilities and volatile content are obscured by media market therefore research is necessary to uncover the virtual nature of the subject.

I believe that understanding the convergence of *networks* will be a first step in constructing cyber social id.

3. NETWORKS OF NETWORKS

It does not have been easy to understand how the impact of networks represents to the internet. Many investigations exist around this issue, but in general, - as I just described before - they have been considerate separately from the context of the networks' relationships.

Pierre Lévy pointed out six different networks involved into the Internet's constitution (Lévy, 2002). According to this author, its background has based mainly on the networks of symbols (signs), languages, peoples, communities, markets, and machine and theirs constant interactions amongst themselves. So, in other words, what is the importance and what is exactly new of these distinctions to this study?

First, it is necessary to define what kind characteristic of each network are affecting not only the constitution of the Internet but also the conception of right and duty in the technological world; we know that it is vast theirs attributes, however I will call attention exclusively to their most significant qualities on cyber citizenship.

3.1 Symbols (signs) & languages

As theorists of postmodern life, they re-created a new spectrum of ways of seeing the Internet through the theory of the signs, or Semiotics. Turkle called them as philosophers of the Culture of Simulation. At this point, Saussure has considered the idea of the conception of

cyberspace where there are not connection between the sign and its meaning… Therefore, we have constantly accessed a series of icons into cybernetic world which connection between them does not make presence at all. And the author continues explaining that "Saussure's insistence on the arbitrariness of the sign has also greatly influenced later philosophers, especially postmodern theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and Jean Baudrillard" (Id, 2002)

As a network of symbols, the kingdom of postmodernist arises and became itself its most significant representative's notion. We cannot separate the idea of icon and the net. It is the base of its space… Through these theories about signs, we can comprehend when the symbols dominated the ways in which we communicate into the virtual world. There are much more studies about the impact of this theories in this communicational phenomenon and they are applied on cyber citizenship too. In other words, to maintain the technological citizenship is necessary to understand this symbols' system; how it works, how it organizes itself. In general line, we need to know that our tools to try to (re)define cyber citizenship initiates with the introduction to this postmodern system, otherwise the virtual world will become a perfect stranger and its relationships to the meaning will be judged by researchers, governments, etc. an enigma.

Virtual world demands postmodern tools witch background has focused on philosophy of language and it also should being based on sign ecology. But, how I just told before, the Internet is a complex network of other networks and to apprehend its conception it is necessary to identify the structure of languages involved in it and it will be the next step towards the characterization of cyber citizenship.

Concerns about language on the internet is not new and everybody knows that English is dominant among others languages into the ecosystem digital. Although "within three years of this study [bellow], the percentage of English Web sites had fallen to 68%, according to Pastore, 2000" (Waschauer, 2004), but this does not represent a huge diminishing.

There is a rank of speakers of a language to the web pages, its percentage recently is changing, and, obviously, it has demonstrating the impact of economic in its uses by languages. Certainly, this is influencing the concept of cyber citizenship and its process of construction and reconstruction. Therefore, through the language the nation also creates the idea of nationality (Anderson, 1983); would be possible the English is the language of cyber citizenship?

In his speech, Darin Barney (2007) called attention to the constitution of the "One Nation under Google - Citizenship in the Technological Republic" - which I intend to explore more in the item 3.3 Markets and Machines – when he explored the growing of English's uses by the markets.

To Carvim (2001), this is the table about the presence of languages on internet and its unfolding:

Table 1
Rank of Speakers of a Language to Web Pages in That Language, 2001

Rank	Language	No. of Web Pages	No. of Speakers (thousands)	Speakers/ Web. Page
1	English	214,250,996	322,000	1.5
2	Icelandic	136,788	250	1.8
3	Sweden	2,929,241	9,000	3.1
4	Danish	1,374,886	5,292	3.9
5	Norwegian	1,259,189	5,000	3.9
6	Finnish	1,198,956	6,000	5.0
7	German	18,069,744	98,000	5.4
8	Dutch	3,161,844	20,000	6.3
9	Estonian	173,265	1,100	6.4
10	Japanese	18,335,739	125,000	6.8
11	Italian	4,883,497	37,000	7.6
12	French	9,262,663	72,000	7.8
13	Catalan	443,301	4,353	9.8
14	Czech	991,075	12,000	12.1
15	Basque	36,321	588	16.2
16	Slovenian	134,454	2,218	16.5
17	Korean	4,046,530	75,000	18.5
18	Latvian	60,959	1,550	25.4
19	Russian	5,900,956	170,000	28.8
20	Hungarian	498,625	14,500	29.1
21	Portuguese	4,291,237	170,000	39.6
22	Greek	287,980	12,000	41.7
23	Spanish	7,573,064	332,000	43.8
24	Lithuanian	82,829	4,000	48.3
25	Polish	848,672	44,000	51.8
26	Hebrew	198,030	12,000	60.6
27	Chinese	12,113,803	885,000	73.1
28	Turkish	430,996	59,000	136.9
29	Bulgarian	51,336	9,000	175.3
30	Romanian	141,587	26,000	183.6
31	Arabic	127,565,000	202,000	1,583.5

Source: Adapted from Carvim (2001)

If we analyze the marked languages in the table as English (1), Russian (19), Portuguese (21), Spanish (23), Chinese (27), and Arabic (31), many market reasons explain these positions.

At this moment, English is at this position (1) for reasons that we already defined but Warschauer demonstrates its diminishing in the next decade to Graddol, 1997 (Warschauer, 2004).

Amongst these 31 chosen languages by this study, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Chinese have identified and appointed the new well-known emergent countries as Russian (ex-URSS), Brazil, Mexico, and China respectively.

Arabic is on the last position, surely it is because of non-Roman scripts which is the base of all Web pages available in the digital ecosystem until now and for political reasons as cyber censorship, cyber terrorism, etc identified by the Citizen Lab (Munk Centre – UofT).

After all, English – as nominated - is a language of cyber citizenship, however, into cyber world, its characterization is changing… it suffers hybridization. If we consider English non-speaker, instead, we will find in the virtual world "English writer" blended into the number of speakers at the first position. Nowadays, it refers to the English non-speaker users and they are creating a new facet of English, the Globish: mix of English and Global language/non-speaker English (Pagon, 2007).

Perhaps, the Globish is cyber citizen's language in which particularities has been a result of non-speaker English and codices of international expression brought it by the language's hybridization of the media market: emoticons, avatars, computational slang, etc.; in addition, it is under construction, and the net's relationships are confirming it.

3.2 Peoples & Communities

Since 80's we are living in the Global Village predicted by McLuhan and this concept underlines the well-known globalization of the markets, of the media, and telecommunication, etc. As we know, after this period, the societies have faced the concept of non-territorial space and this really represents the basis of their challenges; unquestionable, technology is a societies' product and it has been responsible for this transformation and along with it, peoples are adapting themselves to this information age, and others are not. Meanwhile, the digital ecosystem has creating the notion of digital nation as Anthony G. Wilhelm described enthusiastically (Wilhelm, 2004).

Maybe, the author magnifies the advantage of technology into society. However, others countries are excluded from this context and they are nations that make part of the digital divide, what will be discussed later.

On the other hand, many governments migrate to the Web; there is a list of countries and most of them are in the first world (Crapton, 2003), which their services have been available in the online system.

In 2008, a map of peoples' Internet access been elaborated by Miniwatts Marketing Group and it is available on http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm [Accessed the 18th of April, 2007] and it has showed the internet access stats; it demonstrates an interesting preview about this issue

These stats have shown us a big picture about the online reality and they pointed out a user's recent access profile around the world in an unbalanced way. This unfair distribution is

an overcome of bunch political decisions, among of them such their specific priorities: selling, media market, info-inclusion, political party, political technologies, etc.

When we are investigating why peoples are transferring their activities to cyberspace, the first concept that comes to our minds is about the nationality; its function, and its characteristics in this virtual space...

In his famous book "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism", Benedict Anderson (1983) tries to explain the main reason the mind has also became itself seeds to the nationalism.

Around these plural and cultural attempts, another concept of virtual peoples has grown witch decentralization of territoriality toward the non-territoriality is a matter of time… And we know that is the big challenge of our times. What kind nationality cyberspace is creating in our minds, or rather, user's minds?

Making part to cyberspace is not necessarily transferring the peoples to the web… Would we be transferring the countries' economic differences to this new space, would not be?

Is the online world a real mirror to the peoples, or is not? On the other hand, is the Internet mirrors (or windows?) to the super powers show their communicational apparatus and to legitimate them into this Cyber Global Village?

We may be most effective today if we do not let our sense of perspective flow unchecked into the cyber world in order to construct the digital nation.

Rational communication – supported by the network of machines - works in our favor; we can always express our plans into the web not only locally but also in a glocal sphere.

To conduct our sense of direction toward the digital nation, Crampton adverts:

> "Cyberspace is a classic case of a space which is produced, and which in turn produces (spatialized) subjectivity. Thus not only can cyberspace be mapped, but in tracing out its contours we are tracing out the lines on our own faces. Cyberspace is an area of geographic knowledge that sits equally between society and technology. It invites the 'fieldwork' for a critical politics of spatial representation and from that a critical politics of geography and space" (Crapton, 6:2003).

We can infer that there are many territorial aspects that we should not despite as a background to understand the virtual world. One of them are the digital crimes occurred in the web, witch geographical dimension is its main characteristic as Citizen Lab, at UofT, has explained so far.

On a larger scale, a significant number of virtual communities (VCs) have recreated the division between individual and collective space on the Web. Howard Rheingold, Manuel Castells, Píerre Lévy, Marshall McLuhan and others cyber philosopher, and social scientist, introduced their definition, and importance. Tim Jordan explains the definition of cyber communities through the creation of avatars:

> "Communities emerge in cyberspace when a number of users create avatars that return again and again to the same informational space (...)Virtual communities can be of many different types, from newsgroup discussions about a limited topic to MUDs that allow virtual versions of all offline social relations (Jordan, 100:1999)"

Certainly, cyber citizen exists thanks to the communities on the net because VCs are the most important set of networks in it; they are always reuniting users through the ecosystem digital. Example of that is the number of links to them in any kind of website we occasionally access. About Smart Mobs, Benkler (Benkler, 231: 2006) emphasized that Rheingold describes, "*how citizens of the Philippines used SMS to organize real-time movements and action to over throw their governments in a complex modern society*".

Throughout the digital ecosystem, this movement is growing and cyberspace's characteristics explain it partially. To Benkler, in this modern space "things matter can happen any where and at any time, the capacities of people armed with the means of recording, rendering, and communicating their observatory change their relationship to the events that surround them"(Id., 2006).

Significantly, VCs have represented a new step to the political movement's growth in cyber society. Besides this political reason, cyber communities are identifying as cyber segmentation on the web.

In other words, Saassen specifies the limits of cyberspace to bring about changes in existing hierarchies of power and structures of privilege also may be inferred from the fact that existing cyber segmentations can trump women-oriented agendas (Saassen, 111: 2002). In addition, she emphasized that there is no doubt that cyberspace brings new opportunities for women both in business domains and in larger civic as well as home setting (Id, 2002).

Therefore, VCs are fragmented spaces which degrees of cyber segmentation are their main characteristics. In the chapter "Technopower and its cyberfutures", Tim Jordan has nominated the communities on the web to begin by assuming the sovereign individual primary soon come to realize that collective responsibilities and rules appear, create by many

over which no one person has control. In it, he pointed out the two forms of cyberpower (individual and social) is not a simple opposition between individuals and collectives but an inversion of the relationship between them. (Armitage and Roberts, 123-124:2002).

Considering Rheingold's enthusiasms on VCs, his positions have changed themselves. According to Warschauer, Rheingold himself came to moderate his views, partly because of his participation in bitter social conflicts that emerged in and around the Well (Warschauer, 161:2004). And he continues:

> "his critique rests on two key points. First, any technology emerges from and responds to existing social relations and social contexts. (…) Second, and related to the first point, the division between virtual and traditional communities is spurious." (Id, 2004).

Indeed, this division between virtual and traditional communities related by Warschauer really does not exist. There are many communicational bridges among them by sharing virtual and real data. As examples of it are letters, fax, telephone, books, and other media.

All members of different communities have shared information in a range of geographic space by indistinct ways and this exchanging data does not happen only into the virtual agora; in this case, the real word works as an important tool to the virtual ones.

Maybe the recreation of the space by the users has implied in the existence of virtual worlds where the words on the screen replace themselves to the action as Turkle very well defined in her studies (Turkle, 2007).

Besides the words, the language is another explanation to the VCs' connection to the real life. When we enter into the SECOND LIFE^{R} - a famous hybrid game-community, designed by Philip Rosedale - we will meet users from all over the real world under a multiple avatars and theirs masks. Traveling through each virtual space on the SECOND LIFE^{R}(SL) we will be able to realize the perfect separation among cultural islands of the game. At certain degree, we will distinguish what the digital space our online identification will be metaphorically accepted: Brazilian, Spanish, Lover, Investor, Musician, Warriors, and many others communities. Which of them our virtual participation will be more constant? SL will tend to be only a "postmodern fever" and it will soon expire?

The discussion has been one of a series of SL impacts, which are open to the public and held just outside the confines of the exclusive Academia, though they are co-sponsored by the company involved in the project.

Packages, including million of dollars severance agreement have served to stoke virtual money- or SL's money among investor users and ordinary cybercitizens around the world.

When news surfaced that SL will be attending a huge number of users this year as planned, there is a speculation that this virtual community will plan the event following its abrupt growth, and it will promote more access from a great number of users that are located in different countries. This so-called three-dimensional virtual world round has grown since its inception four years ago, launched in 2003.

No matter how complicated SL might seem, its success can be justified mainly by the three-dimension conception of space; it is seducing users into the system. After all, many efforts have been demonstrating by the SL's designer, Philip Rosedale, in order to fascinate its virtual people. Added by texts, SL offers also interactive images; on contrary from the regular VCs spread throughout the digital ecosystem, it opened a new relationship to the users for using game language not only by word but by images too.

It represents a successful interface between games and VC, which redefines a new step toward a multimediatic trans-society. As I told in my book "Cybersociety – who are you in online world?" (Cibersociedade – quem é você no mundo online? – Portuguese version), the VCs would become themselves the most important media product in the net, and they really did. Now VCs are the real grassroots journals into the web, called by the community journalism (Nicola, 2004).

Within SL, the users opened the possibility for living their avatar. To Jones avatar is derived from the Sanskrit avatara and is meant to suggest "the idea of a kind of transubstantiation, the incarnation of life in a different form" (Tofts, 56:2003). And he describes its importance into the SL when the term "*avatar is the common for representations, either textual or visual, of people's presence in a digital environment. In Second Life, avatars are three-dimensional and user constructed in almost every detail"* (Id., 2003)

The participation into the SL is greater and greater day by day and we can infer that this behavior is rapidly changing the public space. Scola has been emphasizing this recent political space promoted by SL. Other example of well-succeed communities into the web has been Orkut[R], with an expressive number of interactive tools. This relationship website – Orkut[R] – has been considerate the most popular websites among others. Its creator, Orkut

Büyükkökten, a young Stanford's PhD student and engineering, has decided to develop a social network project during his 20% of free time at the Google Company.

Recently, Orkut[R] informs that each user is automatically connected to around 50,565,193 users into the system. Into the rank, Brazil is the first country where its success is more evident, followed by The United States and India. Orkut[R] is involved in many problems with the justice of these countries. Recently, Brazilian government prosecutes it by accusing the website of invasion of user's privacy, and others reasons (Ibid, 2003)

Following the website of relationship's path, another one was born around 2003, which name is MySpace. Its success was instantaneous and it was elected one of the best social networks. According to Alexa Internet (www.alexa.com), MySpace is currently the world's fifth most popular English-language website and the fifth most popular website in any language, and the third most popular website in the United States, though it has topped the chart on various weeks.(Id., 2003) The price of a successful and ambitious of social networks' enterprises has demonstrated an intense effort to conquer the users; package of their services are available into these websites, and the everyday a new company dot.com buys each other, and successively.

Besides SL, Orkut, MySpace, others exist in the web as YouTube, Facebook, etc, and always-new ones will come up as a media market's product. After all, are the social network's programmers, web designers, editors really thinking about the impact of these "social" services on cyber society, or is it only media market? Where is the border between media and market into this digital ecosystem?

It is not easy to answer these questions, and more will come… Otherwise, will we be able to see how these websites can manipulate "the idea of socialization" on the web to the users? For example, is it possible to count the number of friends we have and show off it in front-page? Is this the real expression of friendship on social networks? What kind relationship we are constructing on the web? Not only the idea of being is fragmented on the screen (Turkle, 1995) but also how we build it?

Some of these questions, and obviously others, were the bases of many studies about the impact of technology in the real communities. Although seven years ago - one of the most known researches was the Netville at Toronto, Canada, conducted by Hampton & Wellman (Isbister and Ishida, 194-208:2000):

> "Can supportive, sociable and meaningful relations be maintained online? Will life online replace, complement, or supplement life in the flesh?

> Netville is a residential development located in suburban Toronto equipped with a high-speed network as part of its design (…)."

Remarkable as pioneer study, Netville was an example of how to investigate the impact of technology in the border between real and virtual in the community. The results of this study have shown that the pessimist visions about online community are in vain, or rather, who belongs to VCs, in general, read more newspaper, has more access to the classical media, and has more social relationships, etc. (Castells, 103:2003).

Researchers through companies or institutions on VCs are making more and more studies, and the results have addressed to the conflicting visions. In other words, to understand the impact of VCs in the online life is necessary living into these fractal worlds where the volatile dada changes everything in every single moments.

So, there is no doubt that VCs are the Internet basis, and they represent one of the most important network where the rights and duties keep its flame stirred up as described and published in the book "Rights and responsibilities of participants in networked communities", and edited by Dorothy E. Denning & Herbert S. Lin since 1994.

These distinctions help us to visualize the attempt to organize the life on VCs and they have been working during this time but rights and responsibilities will evaluate in many others directions, and certainly, the online world will redefine them constantly.

3.3 Markets and Machines

Market has been defined as an important factor to comprehend the increase of access to the web by pushing its success. Everybody has just tried to sell or to buy things through the net and this is not new. However, the way we are selling or buying is changing. Today their collaborative forms are involving users' relationship as Tapscott & Williams (2007) justified recently:

> "Due to deep change in technology, demographics, business, the economy, and the world, we are entering a new age where people participate in the economy like never before. This new participation has reached a tipping point where new forms of mass collaboration are changing how goods and services are invented, produced, marketered, and distributed on a global basis. This change presents far-reaching opportunities for every company and for every person who gets connected". (Tapscott and Williams, 10:2007)

These authors are calling as Wikinomics these new forms of commercial relationship and their background has four principles: being open, peering, sharing, and acting globally (Id., 20:2007). Beyond this structure, collaborative activities represent an emphatic

explanation to the cyber citizenship's conceptual basis. Have our online rights and duties been constructed by this way? As we detected by this Tapscott & Williams' studies, it is truth that the networking of market and machines on the web has being processing its goods funded in a sharing ideas, and participation. They called attention to the "platforms for participation", "Ideagoras", and others considerations (Ibid.30:2007). And that pace, the collaborative journalism on the net, - wiki -, is finding new shortcuts with the RSS, feeds etc.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In relation to *convergence of networks*, many of the phenomena of online media may be better understood; however, it still needs the tools from the applied social sciences, and - *in special* - the communication - *through cyber social researches* - to leverage new theoretical and practical directions in the online media.

It is clear that an article could not be enough to expose totally the characteristics of the *gap* that separates the practices from the theories presented, but it arises them to promote more discussions, in order to search for instruments designed at the light of the *convergence between networks* – introduced so far – that can outline the profile of this new digital ecosystem. Perhaps the *triad*, highlighted by Kerchkhove, has further emphasized the borderline between the classical and online citizenship, where their constant interactions build the new cyber citizen and their online journalism production.

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