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EDITOR'S NOTE

This English translation has not been published in printed form/Cette traduction anglaise n'a pas été publiée sous forme imprimée

- 1 These days any attempt to model technical objects needs to deal with the development of social usage and the appropriation of technologies (Jouët, 2000; Proulx, 2005; Granjon 2004; Vidal, 2012, etc.) which have an influence through being used in ways for which they were not intended or being “poached” (Certeau, 1980) according to dynamics which can include the possibility for users to modify the structure of the interactivity framework. As Bruno Latour wrote (1991: 4), it is possible to “include [usage] in the nature of things”, to predefine and register it in the design of objects through the development of a usage framework. This is negotiated during the object-border phase (Flichy, 1995: 228-230) and yet real usage has the tendency to move away and even liberate itself¹ from the “imagined usage” (*ibid.*: 214) which goes along with new technological developments. Autonomy is a value promoted in American counter-culture (George, 2012: 34) and is at the heart of sociological approaches to usage which generally take the form of appropriation tactics (Jouët, 2000). In this issue², we shall discuss digital information tools and systems and the ways in which they articulate with developed social practices.

The apparatus [*dispositif*], a source of tensions between constraints and freedom(s)

- 2 We shall begin at the level of the apparatus [*dispositif*]. Taken as “a set of *praxis*, knowledge, measurements, instructions [... by definition, the aim of an apparatus] is to manage, govern, control and direct people’s behaviour, actions and thoughts in a way intended to be useful” (Agamben, 2006: 28). An apparatus can also be considered as a type of flexible, malleable organization that promotes virtualization and is based on a structuring and structured dimension (Massou, 2010: 66-68) which therefore means it is updatable according to the wishes and actions of those for whom it is destined. Indeed Laurence Monnoyer-Smith (2013: 18) refers back to the Foucauldian conception of the term (Foucault, 1977) to note that by definition, an apparatus

“partially eludes the initial strategic intention [...], lives and “is the result of a double process of functional over-determination partly because all positive or negative, intentional or unintended effects either resonate together or contradict each other and require the heterogeneous elements which arise here and there to be taken in hand again or readjusted. It is also a perpetual strategic filling process”.
- 3 This leads the researcher take up the Deleuzian reading of the idea by replacing the Foucauldian resistance with “the existence in all apparatuses of *lines of escape*” (*ibid.*: 19). These are defined as so many social aptitudes “which should not be allowed to be invaded by dispositional logics” (*ibid.*: 27). They are ultimately classed as markers of human creativity because the gap they materialize derives from the freedom left to internet users by the web³ given that “apparatuses construct and structure desire, strategize and compel but their complex structures and the inherent limitations linked to the impossibility of totally instrumentalizing such desires make them permanently susceptible to subversion and profanation” (*ibid.*: 22).
- 4 Users' actions and choices of actions can therefore be modified according to an opening ranging from the strict respect of the proposed framework to supporting emerging practices which are uncalculated and likely to move the lines and borders predefined by this very framework⁴. All apparatuses are therefore destined to escape at least partially those for whom they are intended during their usage. The notion of usage is “intrinsically linked to the recognition of the subjective construction of meaning, the negotiation of practices and the valorization of the autonomy and freedom possessed by individuals” (Granjon, 2004: 3).
- 5 As a socio-technical system, the social web possesses a set of characteristics listed by Serge Proulx and Florence Millerand (2010: 15-16) which can be used to map the freedom of use available to users:
 - the ability to create, save and share contents;
 - accessibility and great ease of use;
 - the mode for collaboration between users which is based on “the idea of the chance formation of links and collectives with neither a collective intentionality nor previously belonging to any communities” and thus the development of “weak co-operations” (*ibid.*: 15);
 - the typological diversity of writing and verbal communication systems.
- 6 With the development of collaborative and participative forms on the web and social networks since the appearance of web 2.0, conversation contract has progressively been set up (Granier, 2001) which marks the comeback of mediation and has

demultiplied the opportunities for the web to re-invent itself. Discursive practices derive from “communities who have become [...] a source of pronouncements” (Bertin, Granier, 2015: 121) and express themselves by “likes” or publishing opinions, comments or even rating “products, services or cultural objects” (*ibid.*: 122). These practices give form to the development of a “logic of appreciation” (*ibid.*: 124) and evaluation on the web created by “strategic interactions between the user agent and the search engine agent” (*ibid.*: 127).

- 7 The wide range of forms of contemporary digital information and communication systems (digital social networks, digital games, dynamic websites, web series, documentarization tools etc.) are faced with issues linked to dematerialization, technological convergence and mobility and also need to deal with the information overload plus the heterogeneity of the information which characterizes their very development,. Streamlined theoretical approaches do not suffice to explain the intertwined info-communicational logic systems underpinning these types of applications.

The socio-narrative adaptability of contemporary information-communication systems at the crossroads of epistemological ideas.

- 8 25 years after the invention of the web and 10 years after the appearance of web 2.0, the development of well-adapted methodologies is required to characterize and analyze the variations derived from users' creativity in the ways they appropriate contemporary digital systems. These are explicitly located at the point where several professional sectors meet (documentation, e-marketing, online games, the social web, etc.). Understanding such variations and the importance thereof is thus made possible thanks to an epistemological framework which functions according to three interlinked levels of definition - observable situations, the analytical framework and production through usage.
- 9 The first two levels led the authors of the texts which make up this issue to locate the subjects at hand at the crossroads of several disciplines, the borders of which tend to fade away because of cut-up, re-stitching, porosity or capillarity phenomena. A social constructivist epistemology can be used to grasp the dynamic dimension of interactions in discursive and communicational articulations in response to the idea of normativity linked to the determinist approach that the logic underpinning information and communication technology usage demolishes (Perriault, 1989). Indeed, beyond the mobilization of the web's relational power, usage helps construct and exchange expressed accounts and develops new forms of narration. The introduction-development-ending structure on which linear accounts are based is being supplanted by more complex architectures managed by both their designers and interactors and whose adjustment variables are spatial as well as temporal. As the narrative schema progresses, the interactor is seen to stage the virtual aspects of the plot (Marti, Baroni, 2014: 3) which strengthens the production of a “feeling of narrativity” (Odin, 2000: 32). Between the total delinearization through hypertextualization and a partial relinearization *via* the associations of contents, a set of forms is installed which are

enriched by the narrative's participative dimension particularly in the case of web-documentaries (Lallemant, 2011).

- 10 This aspect of the socio-narrative adaptability of such systems is found throughout the themes covered in these six contributions. They are not exhaustive in their range as this would have required coverage far superior to the space offered by a journal issue but they each employ different communicational registers (collective elaboration of meaning, construction of identity, human interactions, debate, etc.). The multiplicity of the situations discussed is taken as the starting point with a basis of socio-narratives strategies and tactics (Certeau, 1980) - implementation of the conversational paradigm (Granier, 2001), construction of related accounts accompanying the circulation of statements, categorical generation, etc. - to sketch out an initial overview of the dynamics and diversity which characterize the design and creative appropriation of digital information-communication systems.

Knowledge organization systems and cultural mediation tools: modelling and constructing meaning collaboratively

- 11 Diane Dufort, Federico Tajariol and Ioan Roxin are working on the design of a taxonomic tool for pervasive games⁵ to cultural purpose and situate their study at the crossroads between information and communication sciences and digital design. Making use of a corpus of twelve cultural pervasive games, the authors attempt to reconfigure the descriptive typology of games proposed in 2007 by Christian Elverdam and Espen Aarseth in order to obtain an “explanatory taxonomy” which is adapted to current productions. In their view, cultural pervasive games can provide “an adequate innovative response to the expectations of a new audience” regarding “the co-creation of cultural objects and the social valorization of these experiences”. Exploiting the specific features of multimedia applications and fostering forms of functional interactivity with such works does indeed respond to such expectations and requires different skills and mediation strategies to be implemented. The authors highlight the role played by negotiations between designers and players to update scenarios through interactivity on social, spatial and temporal levels. They note that pervasivity uses a wide range of technologies and interfaces to transmit knowledge and also disseminates information in real time independently of the place or moment.
- 12 Orélie Desfriches Doria opts to put the user at the centre of the documentalist logic and offers a development methodology for *folkclassifications*. In the tradition of faceted classifications, this is based on the possibility of combining terms to create the conditions for the “emerging personal management of information and the collaborative management of occupational knowledge through iterative elaboration [...] based on *tagging* by users”. The author considers “traditional” approaches to the exponential development of online information and its registration and access modalities to be too rigid because questions linked to knowledge and indexing contents are becoming more complicated. Usually the design of knowledge organization systems works by borrowing methodological and conceptual aspects from documentation science (corpus, thesaurus, etc.). However the digital context requires organizational complexity to be considered as an ecosystem because the appropriation of the information systems involves users exercising their rights to write as well as being involved in the documentarization of contents. The author is interested in linking user

conceptions with two conceptions of the activity, one of which is drawn from the cognitive sciences and the other from work psychology approaches. This leads to intersections which are heuristically promising for the complex socio-technical organization at the core of research in the field of information and communication sciences.

- 13 For Florence Thiault, the redocumentarization of the web can also occur prior to the design of information systems. Indexing online digital resources is a thriving sector thanks to the ingenious use of Twitter but it also helps make a positive statement about the professionalism of documentalist-teachers thus promoting the construction of an *ethos* which “conveys the shared values that give direction to professional practices”. These teachers inherit and preserve the objective rigorousness of thesauruses and use Twitter's conversational and metalinguistic potential in this area. Through their production of creative *hashtags*, these document experts rapidly and efficiently manage the difficult task of making thesauruses evolve. It is impossible for thesauruses to characterize the contemporary proliferation of information so to compensate these professionals develop a flexible form of information documentarization which nonetheless respects the principles inherent to their activity. As the author points out, by combining traditional indexing and distributed collaborative social practices, their initiatives serve the reinvented relationship with the semantics of indexing.

Socio-narrative structures: potential for action and interpretation

- 14 When a message needs to be constructed on the basis of elements perceived by all five senses, the combinatorial power of multimedia information processing functions through enunciative translations of the sensorial dimensions involved. Cristina Badulescu focuses on the specific case of the communication strategies used by two internationally recognized Romanian wine brands to discuss the types of logic underpinning the verbal, visual and sound-based portrayal of their respective universes by mixing three theoretical approaches (semiotic, marketing and communicational). For the author, the *storytelling* used by the wine brands in their communication strategies works by anchoring the sensorial aspects of the object in space and time. It provokes shared emotions through semiotic translations and is also based on the use of rituals around wine. The interactive schemas offered to users of digital information applications exploit “the experiential potential of tasting” and according to Cristina Badulescu, by taking on the form of multimodal statements, offer “a number of sensorial experiences which place the subject at the heart of the communication system” thus prefiguring internet users’ “potential to take action” at the moment the websites of wine brands are designed. Webdesign acts as a catalyst for the creation of new relations with consumers and thus enables to cross an in-detail perception of the symbolic dimension based on the consumer experience (experiential marketing) with an imaginary horizon for expectations triggered by the idea the consumer has of the product in relation to the actual historical reality of that product.
- 15 Irrespective of the particularities of the technological framework for writing on the internet (specific technical and semiotic formats), experiencing digital social networks brings up the question of usage in relation with the matter of social links. Hélène Bourdeloie focuses on usages of digital memorial applications (commemorative Facebook pages, memorial web sites, etc.) and positions her analyses at the intersection

between the sociology of death, the sociology of the individual and information and communication sciences. She highlights the fact that “the links between technology and society construct themselves collectively” and notes that, based on “usage experience”, people’s relation with death and the rituals which accompany the loss of loved ones are being reinvented. However, the appearance of digital spaces for remembrance, tributes and memories has led to mourning being experienced through the multiplication of exchanges whose specific illocutionary and perlocutionary features actually contribute to making mourning more complicated. This is because online activities around and linked with deceased people’s Facebook profiles cannot be controlled by the family thus benefiting the messages expressed by the deceased’s friends. Whether it be unexpected uses of information posted online by the deceased while alive or information deduced from the activity of family or friends resulting from their initiatives and comments, on the social stage the transformation of separation rituals with the deceased involves total freedom for digital social applications to make a person’s *post mortem* identity evolve and continue to “perform itself because of these interactions”.

- 16 Finally, when exchanges via digital applications involve contemporary online creations like the web series *Noob*, they present important levels of semiotic hybridization. Analysis thereof requires the modelling of participative, cultural and info-communicational dimensions with complex theoretical assemblies bringing together several types of approaches and paradigms. Julien Pequignot opted to link semio-pragmatic (Roger Odin) and semiotic (Charles S. Peirce) approaches for a study of comments about a character’s quote from the seventh episode of season five of the web series *Noob*. This kind of theoretical intersection is justified by the author’s aim to depart from the immanence of statement posted online. The author assumes the aesthetic dimension of such exchanges to have been abandoned and attempts to follow the different statements on the forum back to reconstruct a semiotic chain and thus understand the specific features of the “object of interpretation” represented by the quote in question and the many comments it inspired. The web is a space for exposure and conversation and carries within itself both the “immediate object” - the web series as presented on the internet - and “the dynamic object” - the episode as it is discussed, related and commented upon on fan forums. The “immediate object” processes itself through pronouncements using an “infinite number of pre-existent textualizations” whereas “the dynamic object” constructs itself through socio-narrative dynamics and by doing so explores and exploits referential capacities namely “specialized habit[s]” to produce meaning.

Conclusion

- 17 While the notion of usage constructs and clarifies itself with an effectiveness “based on different forms of control of action and interaction spaces” at the very heart of the system (Appel, Heller, 2010: 44), questioning of usage has nonetheless not yet been definitively solved by the technological dimension built into digital system because real usage is often different from system injunctions and transgresses limits set by forms of social determinism. These differences are discussed in post-1968 sociological approaches which, according to Josiane Jouet (2000: 494), play “the role of the prime catalyst in the branch of sociology of usages” and lead the notion of usage to take form

in the dynamics of a dual tension – firstly the intention behind the usage and the user's project within the system's limits and social constraints and secondly the narrative possibilities which may evolve according to technological and auctorial constraints.

- 18 However, as we have seen, the dynamism of the system is built into the very definition of the concept. In online forms, it is driven by the distribution of auctorial responsibilities and therefore by the expression of intersubjectivity. In the case of interactive objects designed to be “acted upon” by interactors, the activities of the latter are thus part of a context of weakening of the authors in their role of strong and unique subjects (see Couchot, 1998: 228). We should also note that exchanges between co-authors are by essence flexible and can evolve as they are required to create their own autonomy during the collaboration process. This tendency is particularly notable in online teaching systems in which the relations between teacher(s) and students - exchanges - can be neither “totally preset, nor pre-designed and only really exist through a process of actualization of the functionalities by which the learner develops a certain level of autonomy” (Massou, 2010: 64).
- 19 Apart from the different participants present gaining in autonomy, the consequences of the power of computing code are also important. As social digital systems are programmable, they constitute informational ecosystems likely to model the organizational complexity which they are confronted with. These systems are subjected to the acts of users who reappropriate them as they wish, thus conferring a certain adaptability upon them.
- 20 Forms of creative usage emerge when faced with aspects unthought-of beforehand and these force open the implicit and explicit limits set by the clauses of conception. Even though this kind of freedom may be part of or prepared in the very essence of a system or may develop through the will to find the freedom to give rein to one's creativity, it still should not be thought to free the user from all constraints. For Fabien Granjon (2004: 2),
“As an agent subjected to forms of social, economic and technical determinism, [users nonetheless see their autonomy] restricted by the procedures inherent to devices and also by the identities, allegiances, perceptions, *habitus* and other systems which structure their relations with the world and will condition their desire to appropriate a device, the way of doing so and the practical capacity to achieve this”.
- 21 However, the appropriation phase is not an end itself as uncertainty affects the conditions for *a posteriori* reading of traces of activity and can also cause unexpected effects for users.
- 22 The limits and creative potential of digital information systems are continually questioned both by users and designers and also permanently negotiated by online activity. To be modelled, forms of socio-narrative adaptability henceforth need to be analyzed using pluralized theoretical, practical and professional approaches. These are sources of immanent epistemological questions which need to be reformulated and adapted to the ever-shifting context.

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NOTES

1. This may go as far as the creation of autonomous interactive forms. It should be recalled that unlike heteronymous interactivity in which "interaction is confined within a formal game whose laws are defined for once and for all; the conditions for change [are thus] set from the start and remain invariable" (Morelli, 2000: 87), in the case of autonomous interactivity, interactive exchanges build themselves gradually as transactions progress in an "epigenetic" fashion (Quéau, 1989: 74). The rules for change vary according to events - the laws and models have their own lives.
2. Apart from Hélène Bourdeloie's article, the texts in this issue were presented at the 'Intersections. Construction des savoirs en information-communication dans l'espace francophone' conference (Bucharest, October 30th -November 1st 2014) in the sections entitled "Dispositifs et design numériques, pratiques et usages" and "Ingénierie des connaissances". Their subjects have been reworked for the present publication and evaluated by an expert *ad hoc* scientific committee.
3. L. Monnoyer-Smith (2013: 22) refers to politics on the internet, the usages of which are neither uniform nor completely predefined because "unforeseen usages and appropriations by militant groups" may occur.
4. For further detail on the framework in the invention process, please see J. Schlanger (1983).
5. In their article, D. Dufort, F. Tajariol and I. Roxin consider pervasive games to be an entity with expansive borders and contents transmitted via multiple technologies (wireless networks, geolocalization, sensors, etc.) which mix fiction and reality.

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