

Othon Jambeiro & Marcos Palacios

Brazilian
perspectives
in digital
environments

communication policies,
e-government
and digital journalism



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1 Introduction

The convergence of the electronic media and the telecommunication networks increasingly makes them familiar and omnipresent instruments in social practices (like credit card operations, economic transactions). Computers, as productivity tools and as sources of leisure, are provoking a profound social impact across the whole planet. As Echeverría (1999) emphasizes, this begins to materialize Marshall McLuhan's audacious idea of a global village, the possibility of the most remote places in the world being in direct contact with the processes de globalization of politics (and also, in consequence, of war) and forcibly included or – even worse – excluded from world economics. More and more, people, companies, and institutions are led to think globally, even if they keep on acting locally.

In an epoch marked by the impacts of information and communication technologies, producing and maintaining scientific and technical knowledge, as well as transforming it into economic and social innovations, are more important than ever for the dynamism, sovereignty and prosperity of societies.

The conceptualization of any policy or strategy for information and communication in the current world has to be placed within a conceptual frame of reference founded on at least the following three contexts or bases.

First, the increasing transformation of local spaces for the use of information, culture and entertainment into consumer markets fed

by both national and international patterns; that is the emergence, rapid diffusion and generalization of new technologies of information which are disconnecting the place of information and communication processes from the local and national to the transnational and global.

Second, the increasing technological and industrial convergence in the process of production and dissemination of information, culture and entertainment telecommunication, informatics, microelectronics, culture and services.

And finally, the possibilities of opening up new spaces for individuals and social movements to appropriate the new digital technologies, which also implies cooperation with universities, non-governmental and non-profit organizations, community groups, civil society, and various levels of government.

In this book, the field of information and communication is defined as a combination of structures and processes, products and services which link people to the world, opening avenues of expression and consumption, with information, communication, and telecommunications.

Given its significance for the everyday life of people, social groups, companies, governments and all kinds of organizations, this universe of technology demands public development, policies, regulations, planning, prioritization, guided investment and actions which assure its functioning in a coordinated and efficient way. In the discourse that promotes the Information Society, “the presence of new instruments and services of information” offers “interesting opportunities to construct a society that is more just and equal, and which tends to favor personal development” (European Commission, 1994, p. 7). The appropriation of these “new instruments and services” is a cardinal point for opening the concrete development of the informational society.

As expressed on its title, this book’s purpose is to analyze the pursuing of the information society in Brazil through the analysis of specific cases. It is intended to focus in two primary areas: Policy – in which some aspects of information and telecommunication policies at the national and local level are analyzed; and Digital Content and Online Journalism – presenting an overview of Brazilian research on participative journalism and a case study that confronts teaching practices and

market demands concerning new models of communication and digital journalism in Salvador, Bahia.

All the chapters in this volume can provide important benchmarks for policy makers and we hope they could be of interest for Communication and Information researchers, students and teachers. Furthermore, we believe the book could be useful for the academic community in areas like Sociology and Economics – specially for those scholars interested in the making of the Information Society, and socio-impacts/ construction of new technologies and the policies associated to them. And finally the authors expect that this work could also reach public administrators and the general public, since it provides an easy assessment of theoretical frameworks via concrete case studies.

2

National and local
information and
communication policies

Ohon Jambeiro¹

The reconfiguration of the regulatory environment of communications in Brazil²

Introduction

This study attempts to comprehend how the dynamics of the transformations in the contemporary world, today under the label of Information Society³, have been influencing and giving direction to the

¹ Journalist, Master of Social Sciences (University of São Paulo), PhD in Communication (University of Westminster, London), Full Professor at ICI/Federal University of Bahia, Professor in the graduate Program in Contemporary Communication and Culture and in the graduate Program in Information Science, both at the Federal University of Bahia, and 1-B Researcher of the National Research Council (CNPq).

² Previous versions of this paper were presented and or published elsewhere, in Portuguese.

³ The term is utilized here as a synthesis of the various names given by diverse authors, depending on the approach taken. Nevertheless, it maintains the meaning that was given it by Krishan Kumar (1997): "Throughout the last quarter century we have heard persistent declarations that the societies of the Western World have entered into a new era of their history. These ideas suggest that while they still are, without the slightest doubt, industrial societies, they have gone through such far-reaching changes that they can no longer be accepted by the old names nor studied in the context of old theories. These societies are now, in several ways, post-industrial, post-Ford, post-modern, and even post-historical" (p. 9). With the restriction established by him, in the same work, that "the acceptance of the growing importance of information techno-

regulation of the communications industry in Brazil, starting from the second half of the XX century. It seeks to debate presuppositions of a varied nature that condition the conception and implementation of communications policies, from the point of view of the need for the expansion and radicalization of democracy.

They are conditioning factors that leave little doubt as to the trends that are underway, toward establishing an information society strongly influenced by the increase and sedimentation of the imbalance between the principles of the market economy, on one hand, and the social premises that have traditionally provided support for public services, generally in the form of government subsidies.

Elements of the political, economic and cultural context of the contemporary world, these conditioning factors are data reflecting reality, based on which policies capable of being executed can be constructed, including for combating them. Not recognizing them and failing to consider them critically continue to be the most effective way of turning good intentions and creative ideas into unsuccessful policies.

In reality, information, communications, media, computers, micro-electronics and the electrical-electronic industry have begun to occupy a central place in business development and in the process of companies' expansion in the entire world. The immediate effect of this configuration has been the intensification of the revision of the laws, decrees and regulations that set standards for the sector, evolving soon afterwards into regulatory processes with a view toward technological convergence. Under the influence of this movement – and of the privatization that followed it – technological development has been used as a powerful instrument for deepening and expanding the companies' capability for turning the products generated by that development into merchandise. In the evolution of the process, the information and communications technologies have begun to function as factors for overcoming historical barriers, especially of time and space, for the expansion of business, without which the companies, supported by deregulation and privatiza-

logy, and even of an information revolution, is one thing, but the acceptance of the idea of a new industrial revolution, of a new type of society, of a new era, is something else completely different" (p. 29).

tion, would run the risk of losing the central control of the process. As Mosco (1993) declares:

Capital has learned that the telecommunications system is too important to be left in the control of telecommunications companies. It realizes that electronic services are vital to capital in general as a source of both producer and consumer information commodities and as an instrument of the organizational control necessary for global expansion (p. 149).

An important aspect of reality – to be highlighted because of its seriousness in countries like Brazil – is the urgent need for the sector's policies to take into account the dispossessed, those who do not have sufficient purchasing power to occupy a place in the new flows of information and communications created by the contemporary technologies. They cannot be left aside, above all because they constitute large masses of the population. If we indeed want to move in the direction of a more equalitarian world, we should have in mind what Thurow (1998) asserts:

The nineteenth-century economic winners were those who mastered the steam economy: they needed capital and coal. The twentieth-century economic winners were those that brought scientific research (electrical, mechanical, chemical) into industry. The twenty-first-century economic winners will be those that master and lead the communications revolution (p. 15)

If the great masses remained economically excluded in the XIX and XX centuries, it is necessary now to create paths and strategies that enable their inclusion in the global economy, by means of the mastery of communications, in the XXI century. Communications policies that do not take this point of view into account may be contributing to

projecting into the future the present harm caused by the free market ideology without social control.⁴

Information Society, National States and Brazilian State

The liberal state flourished in the XIX century, displaying a minimalist posture with regard to its duties: internal order, national security, and foreign relations. Its economic basis was that these duties required less government expenses and consequently a lower tax burden for the citizens. The market, acting freely, “naturally” regulated the production, circulation and distribution of wealth, without any interference by the state. This would also “naturally” resolve social problems, with the government responsible only for establishing norms that would assure the equality of rights – but not of socio-economic situations, because this would be the market’s responsibility – for all the citizens.

With the First World War, the state had to take on new responsibilities, above all the coordination and planning of the national economy. It began then to establish the amount of goods to be produced for civilian and military consumption, to ration food and regulate prices and salaries. Because of the war effort, new taxes had to be collected from the population. The emergence of the Soviet Union, at the end of the war, ended up by maintaining the countries with a liberal system as strong states, because it was necessary to combat the new enemy. In addition, Europe had to recuperate from the disastrous effects of the war and this required coordinated actions led directly by the central governments.

The 1929 crisis, the emergence of nazi-fascism and the Second World War prevented any attempt to return to the classic liberal state. The national governments were compelled to wage the war and after this to control their economies, directly intervening in activities that

⁴ An example of this harm is the fact that while more than 60% of the South Korean population has access to the Internet via cable, there are 61 countries that have less than one Internet user per 100 inhabitants (Utsumi, 2003).

might be considered strategic, in the context of the “cold war” between capitalism and socialism. Minerals, energy sources, water, communications and transportation, among other economic activities, began to be the business of the state. In synthesis, the ideas of Keynes⁵ led the new liberal-democratic regimes to eliminate the separation, imposed by classic liberalism, between the economic and social order, on one hand, and the state, on the other. Consequently, the government interference transformed into political conflict the controversies that were formerly resolved in the economic field, by means of market mechanisms, and social problems began to be seen no longer as of a private nature, but rather as of a public nature.

Only in the 1970s classic liberalism re-emerged, with the name of Neo-liberalism, being characterized as a reaction to the state’s interference in the business sphere, with the allegation that the growth of governmental power was negatively affecting individual liberties and free enterprise. The decisive reply to the crisis of Keynesianism was therefore liberal, although the world was still living through the “cold war”. Socialism, which had nourished great hopes of constituting an alternative for the political, economic and social reorganization of humanity, was already weakened by economic disasters, internal pressures for democracy and growing official corruption.

In a general way, it can be said that the liberal project for reform of the world economy – which became victorious in little more than two decades – mainly involved the following points: deregulation of economic activities, privatization of state-owned property and stability, both institutional as well as macroeconomic – in this latter case expressed in policies calling for inflationary goals, austerity in government expenditures and monetary stability. These policies were implemented first in the United States and in Western Europe, especially in England, spreading afterwards throughout the world.

⁵ John Maynard Keynes was an English economist who exercised enormous influence in the world during his time (1883-1946). His were the basic ideas that governed the world economy in the post-1929 crisis phase, according to which the national governments had to intervene in the economic flows of society – especially by means of fiscal and monetary policies – in order to assure stability, employment and income.

It happens that the crisis of 1929 had already demonstrated the market's incapability of being the optimal regulator of the economy. Under its aegis various faults had been observed, such as, for example, the formation of monopolies and oligopolies. Combating these "anomalies" began then to require appropriate regulations, albeit quite liberal, that could guarantee the economic system's stability, both over the short as well as the long term.

Therefore the question was not to discuss whether or not there should be state intervention, in absolute terms, but rather in what way this should be put into effect. For this reason, with the crisis of the Keynesian state, the state's withdrawal from the economy was not contemplated, but instead a new form of intervention, less direct and non-operational, was envisioned. At least in theory, this meant turning the state into an entity for regulating economic activity, supposedly capable of being the judge in conflicts of interest between itself, civilian society and the market.

This re-accommodation of the liberal-democratic regime therefore did not precipitate a collapse of the concept of state nor of the latter's action. On the contrary, it only reinforced the reformed concept of state management, evidenced by the so-called Regulator State.

Confronted with significant budget deficits, says Tremblay (1995), and an accumulated debt that in many cases reached alarming proportions, the national states carried out privatizations and reduced programs, services and personnel. And while they had ideological differences among them, they all began to adopt measures for limiting expenditures and relying to an increasing extent on the market and on civilian society for assuring social regulation.

This reformist movement was also reinforced by new factors, resulting from the emergence of the so-called Information Society, which began to put pressure on the national states to transform themselves (Jambeiro & Ferreira, 2004). Some of the significant impacts of this new configuration of society on the state can be listed as follows:

1 • In first place is the difficulty of regulating the flow of information and relations among individuals when they use tools such as the Internet.

On the one hand, the Internet is a potential powerful engine of growth and education. On the other hand, the heightened access to information and communication with others that the Internet provides empowers people and, as a result, potentially undermines government stability and control (Tyler, 2002, p. 202).

Arguing from the point of view of history and of the technological characteristics of each period, Kumar (1997) calls attention to the breaking of the paradigms of time and space which caused a highly significant change in the possibilities for the regulation of information flows on the part of the state:

The societies of the past [...] were basically limited by space or by time. They were kept cohesive by bureaucratic and political authority, that had as its base a territory, and/or by history and by tradition. Industrialism legitimated the space of the nation-state, at the same time that it replaced the rhythms and movements of nature with the rhythm of the machine. The clock and the railroad timetables constituted the industrial era's symbols. They expressed time in hours, minutes, and seconds. The computer, symbol of the information era, thinks in nanoseconds, in thousands of microseconds. Together with the new communications technology, it introduces a radically new space-time limitation in modern society (p. 23).

Indeed, one of the most relevant aspects involved in the advanced information and communications technologies is the large flow of information, difficult – if not impossible – to regulate, that moves through the networks. As Thurow (1998) declares: “[...] it simply is not possible to limit Access. If anyone has a phone and can make international phone calls, they can jump across any government attempts to limit

access” (p. 17). This causes the state to lose control of essential aspects of society that are under its direct responsibility. For example, organized crime can use these networks to do business, far from the state’s vigilance.

[...] criminals with technical capability already have available modern encryption processes that makes it possible for them to carry out a free exchange of information in networks such as the Internet, that operates according to unwritten laws and without any higher management or level of control (German, 1997, p. 38).

The state, in turn, is also beginning to utilize these technologies in a consistent way, in order to expand its contacts and perform services for the citizens, as in the case of elections in Brazil, which today utilize an electronic support, as well as e-government programs.

2 • Another impact is the citizens’ growing demand for greater governmental transparency. They are putting pressure on the state to open its systems and databases for access by everyone, including with the intense participation of the media. The latter, in turn, continually seeking recognition of their role as a prerequisite for guaranteeing democracy, voraciously scrutinize the government’s actions. In the words of Smythe (1994): “The obvious thrust of the ‘social responsibility theory’ is still to protect the mass media against government, and ‘freedom’ for the mass media is regarded as freedom to penetrate into the affairs of government” (p. 94).

Which, according to Castells (2000), ends up by constituting one more limiting factor of the nation-state, in its traditional form.

3 • A third impact refers to the risk inherent in global capital, that moves in great volumes all around the planet, thanks to the present tools of communications and information.

The multinational company lives by communication. The latter is what confers on it the identity as a company that covers the world.

Computers and satellites are as essential for its operation as the workers and the factories that produce goods and services (Kumar, 1997, p. 19).

But this does not happen in a neutral way. On the contrary, multinational companies “act on a worldwide scale, without national, regional or neighborhood commitments and attempt to decide, preferably all by themselves, the guidelines for expansion of the Information Society” (German, 1997, p. 45).

The Internet and the telecommunications boom in the 1980s and 90s made it possible for international finances to attain a very advanced degree of integration and provided great mobility for capital.

Purchase and sale operations were de-territorialized. ‘International trade, something that used to be at the margins of most economies, is now at the center of all economies. National economies are blurring and becoming part of a global economy. [...] Everyone has to compete with those in the rest of the world, directly or indirectly sell to those in the rest of the world, and directly or indirectly buy from those in the rest of the world’ (Thurow, 1998, p. 22).

This impact appears among the most difficult ones to be faced by the national states. The uncontrollable flows of capital and the inequality (and, in certain cases, the forced equality between obviously unequal countries, in terms of their stages of development, as is the case of the countries of the so-called Third World in comparison with the First World) of treatment in international trade, have been powerful obstacles to the peripheral countries’ development

4 • A fourth impact occurs on the level of the state’s cultural action, seeking its very preservation as the representation of a unique society. The idea of a global village, which places in check local identities, has established new codes of recognition that, in some way, tend to move away from the local identity, inserting individuals into a global culture. In the words of Thurow (1998):

Since governments have no way technologically to deny their citizens access to the global culture, they lose their ability to protect their national cultures. Traditionally, the very definition of national states has revolved around their different cultures. But with individuals increasingly having direct satellite links with the world's culture and being less dependent upon links that are, or can be, nationally controlled, national cultures will for the first time have to compete with a global culture. Some national cultures will undoubtedly survive this global competition, but others not (p. 19).

There does not seem to be a total movement away from and loss of the individuals' cultural identity when this insertion occurs. But the formation of a global culture, with which the citizens begin to interact, can break cultural ties from birth and establish paradigms for viewing the world and for behavior far from the standards recognized by the national state, above all by means of the educational and legal systems. (Herscovici, 1995; Jambeiro, 2000).

5 • Finally, there is the impact that is gradually becoming stronger of the existence and strengthening of supranational organizations. Giddens (1991) warns that it is necessary to pay attention to the dynamism and global scope of these organizations, that place themselves above the interests of the nation-state, proposing a world order centered on supranational aspirations, objectives and mechanisms of character and values. Although they may seem, at first sight, to be the fruit of the consensus of humanity, in practice, however, they are the result of articulation among member states, under the domination of those that possess greater economic and military power. What is considered to be of supranational character and value is frequently just the strategic objective of the most powerful states.

All this resulted in Brazil in the delimiting of the size of the state (which led to the privatizations of the government companies), in the redefinition of its regulator role (which resulted in the creation of the regulatory agencies), in the recuperation of governance (interpreted as the state's financial and administrative efficiency), and in the increase

in governability (interpreted as the capability for exercising the power that is attributed to it by the Constitution and the entire legal system). This meant a highly significant change in the Brazilian state's structure and operational behavior.

Established in the beginning of the XIX century, with the Independence from Portugal, the Brazilian national state, with the creation of the Republic at the end of the same century, was made up of regional political powers, looking after their own interests. The political and economic elites looked upon the central government only as being responsible for foreign policy and the holder of public money (originating from coffee, cacao, meat, wood and rubber exports, mainly), then established as the exchange currency in political relations that were periodically fortified again by means of fraudulent elections.

The 1930 Revolution established new bases for that relationship and, starting in 1937, with the implementation of the dictatorial regime which called itself *Estado Novo* (New State), imposed a view of Brazil as a unified country. The public event of the burning of the provincial flags⁶ symbolized the birth of the modern Brazilian state. This revolutionary movement was the initial point of the utopian concept of the contemporary national state, that is to say, an entity always considered as capable of – and destined to – articulate, in an impartial and just manner, the interests of all the groups, classes and social layers, for the well being of all the people.

From that point on, the Brazilian utopia began to be the nationalistic state that proposed to implement an urban-industrial capitalism, to protect the country against foreign influence, and to have it turn back to its own values and culture.

But in spite of the nationalistic discourse, the influence of foreign capital in Brazilian life was enormous. With respect to the information and communications industries, it had intensified with the beginning of the commercial exploitation of the radio stations, in the middle of the 1930s. In that period, the American advertising agencies, brought

⁶ In an event that symbolized the creation of the *Estado Novo*, Getúlio Vargas promoted, in 1937, after the military coup that kept him in power for eight more years, a ceremony in which the flags of all the Brazilian states (at that time called provinces) were placed on a pyre and burned.

by the multinationals commercializing products for domestic use (powdered soap, soap, toothpaste, etc.) that implemented the commercial system of the sale of audiences for advertisers and sponsorship of programs by companies (the Reporter Esso and the radio soap operas were outstanding examples of this).

A considerable time afterwards, it behoved the military dictatorship established in 1964 to strengthen the role of the state in the national life and reorganize the public administration. The restrictions on democracy and the implementation of the Doctrine of National Security required the complete and systematic redesigning of the mechanisms and organisms for social and political control. The internationalization of the domestic market demanded the expansion of the production and national distribution of consumer goods by means of – among other things – the creation of credit facilities, advertising and expansion of the means of transportation and communications.

In the post-military dictatorship period, Brazil had reasonable rates of industrial growth, but had become one of the countries with the greatest difference between rich and poor. The national income was concentrated in the well-to-do layers of society, with the majority of the population prevented from taking advantage of the benefits of the growth. In reality, what was gained in capital accumulation was lost in social equality.

In the 1980s and especially in the 90s the country was strongly influenced by scientific and technological development. The information and communications processes acquired other forms and their potential was developed in such a way that they began to influence decisively all the fields of Brazilian life.

The Brazilian state did not escape from this transformation. It was impacted in an organized and progressive manner, starting with the end of the 1980s, with the Collor de Mello Administration. Subsequently redefined, in the Fernando Henrique Cardoso Administration, within the neo-liberal logic, the Brazilian State turned into a Regulator State.

The Democratic Question

The socio-economic development of Brazil – as well as its transformation into an urban industrialized society – favored, in the closing years of the XX century, the emergence of a cultural taste and lifestyle that turned specific layers of the population into large consumers of digital products and services. For other social segments, this consumption remained far from reality, although there have always been efforts by civilian society entities and governments of various levels attempting to incorporate them, even though only partially, into the so-called Information Society. In recent years, these efforts have been increased, influenced by the gains accomplished in the establishment of new socio-economic, political and cultural relations, on the national and international levels⁷.

There was an intense modernization of the country, with the development mainly of the industrial and services sectors, although the increase in the unemployment rate was immediately associated with this. The social stratification changed, with the growth of the middle classes, the emergence of new professions – several of them intellectually and scientifically sophisticated – and the reduction in the number of workers in the traditional industries. New cultural values emerged, influenced by international trends, subordinated to production processes directly or indirectly integrated with the international market for symbolic goods. There emerged new lifestyles and consumption patterns, and new methods of public and private management. Emerging social groups began to represent new roles in the construction of society's public dimension, in the media, in the arts, in sports, in the economy, in politics, characterizing relatively clearly the expansion of citizenship.

More and more social groups have risen, above all by means of formal education and socio-economic ascension, to higher levels of social

⁷ The continued work of national and international entities, generally organized in the form of NGO, has had an extraordinary role in the change of people's attitude regarding themselves and others. Because of this, signs have increased of the establishment of an increasingly expanded "international civilian society", very committed to social inclusion and the reversal of the negative effects of the globalization of the economy, of politics and of culture.

participation and consequently expanded the practice of citizenship, including within the circles formerly restricted to the political, economic and intellectual elites. This led layers and groups, whose thinking and action were traditionally directed toward the maintenance of a not fully democratic reality, to have to start to cooperate with – or fight against – people and groups that began to live political experiences in the same institutional spaces, and who brought with them a strong – and at times, highly regarded and positive – desire for full democratization of that reality.

These transformations ended up by putting pressure on the processes of formulation and execution of communications policies, traditionally under great influence from the political elites. Groups that disagreed with the non-democratic processes of formulation and implementation of those policies have been obtaining, in recent years, more consistent and organized civic mobilizations and also access to the occupation of certain government positions – in the executive, legislative and judicial branches – and based on these platforms for discussion and action, have begun to question those processes and propose alternatives.

This new political configuration led to the inclusion of the value of democracy in the debate carried on in the Brazilian institutional areas responsible for the formulation and execution of policies. It also appears to be signifying a growing, albeit slow, loss of the hegemony of the elites that have always dominated the processes of regulation of communications. To the extent that this process develops and accelerates, the ties between a no longer hegemonic elite and other representations of the society can become closer and more organic. And the more the society becomes democratic, the more it will be able to change positively the new elites' self-evaluation. Democratization, in this case more than in any other, will signify essentially a reduction in the political distance – and consequently in the decision-making power – between categories of citizens that have different degrees of historical participation in the construction and development of Brazilian culture, identity and wealth.

The democratic issue also extends to the debate regarding the national identity of Brazil, especially in a scenario of convergence of the structural technologies of the so-called Information Society. Informative-cultural services⁸, with each passing day more referenced to global values, appear to tend to contribute increasingly less to establishing an awareness of national identity, in its local, regional and national dimensions. The high and increasing degree of importation of content indicates the existence of strong pressure from other cultures on the Brazilian national identity. This pressure will only be capable of being neutralized by means of the socialization of the individuals, of intensification of the use of the national language, of schools, of families, and of participation in social, civic, political, economic and cultural life, in their various dimensions.

From the point of view of local or regional identity, its preservation and strengthening depend on the informative-cultural services giving, in the first place, relative attention to local and regional information, controversies, opinions, aspirations and positive facts; and in the second place, support for local interests in conflict with outside interests, especially in matters such as environment, investments, creation of jobs, businesses etc. Affirmative policies and actions would certainly satisfy social expectations with reference to making Brazilian society better informed, with a more participant democracy and more socially responsible individuals, in the full exercise of their citizenship rights.

Murdock (1999) asserts that there are two basic cultural pre-conditions for full citizenship: firstly, all the basic cultural rights, that is to say, information, knowledge and representation, must be guaranteed; and secondly, everyone must have access to a collective symbolic space. He says that cultural capitalism falls short in its compliance with these pre-conditions in three crucial aspects:

⁸ This expression is used here in a conceptual frame of reference that recognizes the existence of an infrastructure of information and communications, based on which services are generated, with varied applications, functions and roles in the society. Informative-cultural services, in this conceptual frame, are newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, Internet, virtual libraries, among others.

1 • Private ownership of the media, together with the growing domination of the advertising budgets, has led to a situation in which corporate interests are always in competition with the public interest. In addition, topics and representations that are essential for citizenship are continually compromised by the concentration on what can readily be sold.

2 • The organization of the distribution of cultural resources, by means of the system of prices or of advertising sponsorship, has made access to those resources dependent on people's income, creating in this way inequalities and exclusions that undermine the principle of universal coverage, on which the ideal of citizenship rests.

3 • Addressing people as consumers making choices in the market, cultural capitalism corrodes the citizens' identity. And it is this identity that leads people to feel they are members of a moral and political community, based on a continually renegotiated equilibrium between individualism and solidarity, rights and responsibilities.

The increase in the universal coverage of information and communications services is then a basic condition for Brazilians' full participation in the exercising of citizenship. In the same way, combating the lack of basic preparation of expressive contingents of the country's population should signify the strengthening of the state programs that utilize night schools, remote teaching, food safety and health, digital and social inclusion, critical exposure to the most varied means of communications. This is possible, although in Brazil, as in dozens of other third world countries, the contribution of international aid is necessary⁹. But the use of the state's resources for this purpose is equally imperative.

⁹ Just to give a simple example: a UNO study showed that seven billion dollars annually, during 10 years, are necessary in order to provide basic education for all the children in developing areas and countries; this amount is only a little more than half of what Europe spends each year on the consumption of ice cream – 11 billion dollars (Unews Brasil, 2002, p. 10).

Defending the existence of public funds for informative diversity, Murdock (1999) declares that, in an economic environment in which cultural power is more concentrated in the hands of large corporations, and in which the social and geographic reach of the latter becomes more extensive, the existence of strong independent sources of contraposition is essential. Without them it is very probable that the era of convergence, while it witnesses an explosion of the plurality of sources, will end up by being characterized by a reduction in the diversity of content, which would erode the existing democratic institutions and would cause the loss of a historic opportunity to use the new media in order to extend and enhance the democratization process among individuals, organizations, institutions and the state.

The information and communications technologies should be learned and utilized, therefore, having in mind not only the personal fulfillment of each human being, but also for the democratization of social processes, greater transparency of the government and mobilization of the population with respect to its responsibility in the administration of the public services of its city, its state and its country.

Conclusion

The expansion and the sophistication of the information and communications industry and services have led to the appearance of different organizational forms, with a strong trend toward the development of large multinational databases and multimedia services, both for satisfaction of the needs of large publics as well as for the performance of selective personalized information services, devoted to users with special interests. These new organizational forms, defined within the contemporary processes of globalization, privatization and liberalization, are based on a vertiginous and convergent scientific and technological development. They require intensive capital investment and are in general intimately linked to multinational companies, under whose aegis they conceive, produce and sell all types of products and services.

Selling, furthermore, is a crucial demarcating activity of the new configuration of the regulatory environment of communications, in the entire world, as dozens of authors have been calling attention to this fact, since the early years of the 1990s. Tremblay (1995), for example, was asserting this ten years ago:

The major stakes involved in the information highways pertain do the creation of both a professional and a mass market that will foster the redeployment of our economies. What has until now been offered free of charge, that is, inscribed in a public service logic, will henceforth be offered in a paying mode, that is, inscribed in a commercial logic (p. 21).

Melody (1993), in turn, in the same epoch, was arguing that the changes were basically occurring in the marketing characteristics of information:

First, the technology of generating, processing, and transmitting information at drastically reduced unit costs has provided quantum leaps in the capacity to supply information. Second, in the real economic markets – if not the economic theories – it has been discovered that many kinds of information heretofore not provided through formal market systems have high exchange market values. It is now profitable to search for many new kinds of information that, in times past, were not sought because it was not profitable to do so. Information that previously was outside the market and not included as economic activity has now been drawn into the market (p. 75).

Transformations such as this one, making up the new configuration of the regulatory environment, are strong conditioning factors in the processes of the conception and execution of information and communications policies, and even with regard to the national identity of each nation-state. In the first place, because the possibility of success in the maintenance of that identity lies, to a large extent, in obtain-

ing a good potential for production of content that corresponds to its citizens' values, experiences and perspectives, in its national language, and in the second place, because only an efficient state policy can facilitate the population's access to this production.

This last aspect brings up the issue of the citizens' social and informational inclusion, especially through mastery of the digital technologies. This is a basic presupposition for achieving the individuals' human and social development, in the context of what is called the Information Society. The possibility of interaction with others, via individualized or network flows of information, encourages the exercising of citizenship.

A phenomenon with similar repercussion is the worldwide trend, guided by the market and by technology in the direction of the convergence of information services with digital structures and networks. Referring to the computer element, for example, Mitchell (2000) emphasizes that it is already present in all kinds of products:

Your micro-wave, your dishwasher, and your clothes washer incorporate more processing power than advanced computers of a few decades earlier. Television receivers and cell phones are packed with digital circuitry. Complex film-loaded cameras are giving way to digital electronic ones with almost no moving parts. Programmable card key systems are replacing mechanical locks and keys on doors.

[...] Eventually, we will cease to conceive of computers as separate devices, and begin to regard machine intelligence as a property that might be associated with just about anything (p. 46).

In Brazil, although this phenomenon is still, from the point of view of the majority of the population, just a trend, the creation of an appropriate, synthetic regulation, but with wide coverage and conceptually solid, in the communications sector is the key question in order to make it possible for the country to use the sector's technological development for the benefit of the citizens. This is also crucial for the future of an

Information Society with a democratic character that would provide universal coverage.

The most indicated path appears to be that of the radicalization of democracy and of the exercising of citizenship. By taking this path, it will be possible to change the form and the socio-economic and cultural face of Brazil, by the continuous inclusion of new social strata in its national, regional and local decision-making processes. These emerging interest groups, to the extent that they acquire familiarity with the mechanisms of power, with the political reality and the established order, can consistently contribute effectively to their own inclusion, in an organized way, in the society.

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Municipal telecommunications policies and strategies: the case of Salvador¹

Introduction

This paper presents the result of an analysis of the policies of the municipality of Salvador concerning telecommunications infrastructure and services (TIS), with relation to four aspects: roles attributed to these infrastructure and services in the municipality's development; roles reserved for the municipal government, with respect to the provision of these services; strategies underlying the guidelines traced for this sector; posture with regard to the economic conditioning of the adoption of these technologies by the poorer classes of the population.

The research forms part of the field of study of Information and Communications Policies. This field is by its very nature convergent, and includes political, economic, technological and legal studies, especially the intersections and mutual influences of these factors, in view

¹ Previous versions of this paper were presented and or published elsewhere, in Portuguese.

of the public and private strategic interests and objectives, concentrated on the infrastructure and performance of services. It is also concerned with the process by which the legislative, executive and judicial branches delimit, articulate and arbitrate the conflicting interests of the various social groups that intend to act in the sector, having as a reference point – at least in theory – the public interest.

In the case of the research presented in this article, the methodology included: (1) analysis of the Brazilian Federal Constitution, Constitution of the State of Bahia and Statute of the Cities (Federal Law nº 10,257 of July 10, 2001), in order to identify the powers attributed to the municipality with reference to the regulation, concession, control and supervision of telecommunications infrastructure and services in its territory; and (2) study of the Organic Law of the Municipality of Salvador and of its Master Plan for Urban Development (PDDU)², in order to ascertain whether this city makes use of those powers and what policies it traces for TIS, with relation to the four aspects proposed.

The work initially presents aspects of the legal context referring to telecommunications services. Then it examines the relation between the cities, the national state and the regulation of TIS. Following this, provisions that attribute, withdraw, condition or limit the City's powers to deal with telecommunications infrastructure and services are identified in each one of the legal documents. Finally, it analyzes these provisions with relation to the four aspects mentioned above.

Legal Context

Hovering over the telecommunications infrastructure and services are regulations and policies of the national states, with a varying degree of governmental interference, in addition to plans, strategies, priorities and investments of the domestic and international corporations that are active in this sector. The regulations and policies have been justi-

² The PDDu here under analysis is the one approved in 2004. Another one was approved in 2008, but it has been contested in justice by civil societies organizations and political parties.

fied by the argument that the *public interest* is more effectively advanced by means of them than by the liberal principle of non-interference by the State. They seek to avoid not only anarchy in the supply and consumption of those services, but also that powerful interests become dominant, making more difficult, or even preventing, competition and diversity, attributes of the market that, in theory, benefit the citizens.

In Brazil, the governments have been intervening in this field in several ways, with emphasis on the concession of licenses for using the electro-magnetic spectrum for performance of the services, control of the advertising of dangerous products, protection of children and adolescents and guarantee of the right of reply. However, other issues, in which the conflict of interests, especially economic and political, is more strongly centered, are present in the core of the regulatory processes.

With reference to the municipalities and their interference in matters relating to telecommunications infrastructure and services, little knowledge has been accumulated in Brazil. This is due above all to the fact that the Brazilian federative tradition reserves for them little or no decision-making power in the field of the TIS. In the period prior to the promulgation of the Brazilian Telecommunications Code in 1962, the municipal governments used to set up, or to authorize private companies to set up telephone companies, but not only did the Federal Constitution then in effect not permit this, but also Telebrás, created by the Code, took over for itself almost all the telephone companies existing in Brazilian territory. Today the dominant interpretation of the national legislation attributes to the municipalities in this field only the possibility of maintaining TV channel relay towers, where necessary and by mutual agreement with the concessionaires, to guarantee that their citizens receive the signal at home.

Nevertheless, there are margins for action forced by the municipalities, almost always in the face of resistance by the Federal Government and by the telecommunications companies. For example, in June 2005 Law 14,013 went into effect, after being approved by the City Council and promulgated by the Mayor of São Paulo, authorizing the municipality to grant concessions for community radio stations (São Paulo,

2005), repeating the City of Campinas, that had done the same thing in 2004 (Campinas, 2005)³. In July another municipal law was approved in São Paulo forcing the providers of telecommunications services to place their cables underground. Also the City Council of João Pessoa in the State of Paraíba approved a bill, signed by the mayor in January 2006 (Law 10,716), containing provisions referring to the community radio broadcasting service in the city. According to this law, the concessions, supervision, disciplining and regulation of community radio stations are attributions of a Municipal Communications Council⁴.

Another example has occurred in Brasília and although it refers to the jurisdiction of the Federal District, it will have consequences for the municipalities, because in the States they are the ones responsible for the type of regulation in question, called in the Statute of the Cities, Previous Study of Neighborhood Impact (EIV, for Portuguese). In this case, while the Supremo Tribunal Federal (STF) – Federal Supreme Court has not yet handed down any decision, the Solicitor General of the Republic issued an opinion in January 2006 recognizing as legitimate Law n. 3,446/2004, approved by the Federal District, regulating the installation of towers, Estação Radio Base (ERB) – Radio-Base Stations, for mobile telephony. He alleged that while it regulated a service under the jurisdiction of the federal government, the law contained provisions relating to urban development and public health, both topics being included in the scope of the Federal District’s legislative jurisdiction.

It should be noted that the Solicitor General recognizes the law’s validity because it relates to public health and urban development and not because he considers that it is up to the Federal District to interfere

³ In Campinas, however, the law did not go into effect, due to a judicial suit brought by the Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (ABERT) and the São Paulo Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (AESP). There are records that other Brazilian cities such as Itabuna in the State of Bahia; Guagimirim, Duque de Caxias and São Gonçalo, in the State of Rio de Janeiro and São Bernardo do Campo and Santo André, in the State of São Paulo, have already created laws that make community radio station concessions a municipal responsibility, but as in Campinas, in some other cases these laws were later contested in the courts, at the request of ABERT. (Municipalizar..., 2006). While news circulates that the municipalities of Itabuna in the State of Bahia and Montes Claros in the State of Minas Gerais had approved similar laws, it has not been possible to obtain data that would confirm this news.

⁴ Law 14,023 of 7/8/2005.

in any way in the regulation of telecommunications infrastructure and services, held to be the exclusive responsibility of the federal government. The matter was in the STF due to a Direct Unconstitutionality Suit (ADI 3501), brought by the Associação Nacional das Operadoras Celulares (ACEL) – National Association of Mobile Telephone Companies based on the allegation that the law approved by the Federal District violated articles 18⁵; 21, section XI⁶; and 22, section IV⁷ of the Constitution.

The legal contestation of these municipal laws was based then on the constitutional provisions that reserve telecommunications, according to the interpretation dominant up to now, for the decision-making power of the Federal Government. That is, only the National Congress and the President of the Republic can pass legislation on this matter. This would be based on article 22 of the Constitution mentioned above, which gives the Federal Government the exclusive right to legislate with regard to “water, energy, computing, telecommunications and radio broadcasting”.

However, new interpretations also based on the Federal Constitution have questioned the Federal Government’s exclusive power over telecommunications infrastructure and services. The main allegation is that article 30 of the Brazilian Constitution attributes to the municipalities the authority to “legislate with regard to matters of local interest”, in addition to “supplementing the federal and state legislation when applicable” and to “organize and perform, directly or by means of a concession or permission system, public services of local interest [...]”. Since these provisions are in the Federal Constitution, the interpreta-

⁵ Art. 18. The political-administrative organization of the Federative Republic of Brazil included the Federal Government, the States, the District Federal and the Municipalities, all of them autonomous, in the terms of this Constitution.

⁶ Art. 21. It is the responsibility of the Federal Government:
XI – to exploit, directly or by means of authorization, concession or permission, telecommunications services, in the terms of the law, that will provide for the organization of the services, the creation of a regulatory entity and other institutional aspects (Wording given by Constitutional Amendment n° 8 of 8/15/95).

⁷ Art. 22. It is the exclusive responsibility of the Federal Government to legislate with regard to:
IV – water, energy, computing, telecommunications and radio broadcasting.

tion is that they have the same legal value as those contained in article 22, especially when consideration is given to the federalist principle, by which no one sphere of power – Federal Government, States and Municipalities – can invade another (Silveira, 2001).

Little by little, therefore, the cities have awakened to the importance of the issues linked to telecommunications infrastructure and services, above all due to the fact that the new technologies implemented in this sector have become vital for contemporary cities, that are, as Chambers (2003) asserts, concentrations of knowledge, centers of innovations, the main places where information is interpreted. The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have indeed caused significant alterations in the social, economic and cultural relations of urban centers. On one hand, they encourage the virtualization and globalization of the citizens' relations, among themselves and with the most varied public and private organizations of the local, national and global society; and on the other hand, they tend to deepen the social exclusion of those who do not have access to these advanced technologies. Depending on where the city is situated, this exclusion can take on enormous seriousness from all points of view.

Now that the process of controversy between the cities and the nation-state has been initiated, significant developments should be expected, both in the courts as well as in the political world, in order to redistribute the regulatory power of the ICT. Nevertheless, whatever the result may be, it will continue to be indispensable for the cities to construct and carry out their own policies for the adoption and dissemination of the use of these technologies, both in public administration as well as in the citizens' community and private life. Occupied on a daily basis with establishing and making operational infrastructures of transportation, garbage collection, health, education and social service, the municipal governments have developed little understanding as to the significance of TIS policies, both from the economic-financial as well as from the social, political and cultural viewpoints. A large part of the municipal administrators believe that this sector of national development is beyond the reach of municipal policies. Therefore it is necessary to study, debate and analyze the powers, limitations and

conditionings that the cities have for influencing policies relating to the access to electronic information and to telecommunications.

The City's Power

In this section the constitutions of Brazil and of the State of Bahia, and the Statute of the City are analyzed, seeking bases for assessing the City's power over telecommunications infrastructure and services regulation.

The Federal Constitution defines the Municipalities as part of the Republic, as are the Federal Government, the States and the Federal District, all autonomous among themselves. This autonomy, however, is conditioned by the Federal Constitution itself (article 18)⁸ The problem lies precisely in making this autonomy compatible with the constitutional provisions, which in many cases seem to invalidate it, especially in the context of the so-called Information Society.

While subsequently modified in some aspects, the Constitution was concluded in 1988, at a time in history when Brazil was still outside the telecommunications revolution that had already started in the United States and in some European countries, and that established new economic, social, cultural and technological paradigms. In this last aspect, for example, the convergence began to be dominant, making certain aspects of the Constitution appear considerably far from reality. For example, it deals with telecommunications and computers separately, ignoring the so-called telematics, and says nothing about the worldwide network of computers, nor about the new configuration of the information industry⁹.

⁸ Art. 18 – “The political-administrative organization of the Federative Republic of Brazil comprises the Federal Government, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities, all autonomous, **in the terms of this Constitution**” (authors' boldface).

⁹ Art. 22, for example, establishes that the Federal Government has the authority to legislate with regard to “computing, telecommunications and radio broadcasting”, in this way, separately, it does not mention the Internet nor digital information services.

Article 23 declares that the Federal Government, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities have joint authority to “provide the means of access to culture, to education and to science”, and establishes in one paragraph that a supplementary law – never made – will define the norms for this cooperation. Article 30 provides that the municipalities have authority to “legislate with regard to matters of local interest”, as well as to “supplement the federal and state legislation when applicable” and to “organize and perform, directly or by means of a concession or permission system, public services of local interest”.

Corroborating the constitutional provision of autonomy among the participants of the Brazilian federation – the municipalities being one of them – article 241 says they should discipline, “by means of laws, public consortiums and cooperation agreements between the federated entities, authorizing the associated management of public services, as well as the total or partial transfer of responsibilities, services, personnel and assets essential for the continuity of the services transferred”.

This is in direct contradiction to article 156, which authorizes the municipalities to establish taxes on services, in their territories, but explicitly excludes telecommunications services taxes, attributed by article 155 to the States and to the Federal District. These two federated entities can establish and collect taxes on this type of service, passing on to the municipalities where it is performed only 25% of the tax collected (art.158).

The Constitution of the State of Bahia, in turn, approved in 1989, defines the municipality as a unit forming part of the federation, with political, administrative and financial autonomy and ruled by organic laws and other laws that it adopts, “obeying the provisions of the Federal Constitution and of this Constitution” (article 55). It adds another condition to those in the Federal Constitution, as provided in article 59, which establishes that the municipalities, among other attributions, are responsible for “organizing and performing public services of local interest, considered to be those **whose execution has its beginning and conclusion within their territorial limits** (authors’ emphasis)”. This is a question of a problematic temporal/spatial concept, even when not taking into consideration the telecommunications and information tech-

nologies implemented in Brazil starting in the 1990s. According to this provision, for example, electric power and water supply services would be outside the municipalities' jurisdiction. And even health and education, that are operated to a large extent as federal and state systems, would be, from certain points of view, sectors not controllable by the municipalities.

Created by Law 10,257 of July 10, 2001, the Statute of the City regulates articles 182 and 183 of the Federal Constitution that comprise "Chapter II – Urban Policy". It gives the cities full power to prepare and execute their master plans for development, having as guidelines the guaranteeing to the citizens, among other things, of participation in the formulation, execution and follow-up of plans, programs and projects, and the offer of "public services adapted to the population's interests and needs and to local characteristics". The purpose of the plans is to "command the full development of the cities' social functions and guarantee their inhabitants' welfare" (article 182).

Article 36 establishes that "municipal laws shall define the private or public undertakings and activities in the urban area that will depend on the preparation of a Prior Estudo de Impacto de Vizinhança (EIV) – Neighborhood Impact Study for obtaining permits or authorizations for building, expansion or operation, for which the municipal governments are responsible". And article 37 declares that the "EIV will be performed in such a way as to take into account the positive and negative effects of the undertaking, or activity, on the quality of life of the population resident in the area and its surroundings."

The municipalities' powers regarding telecommunications infrastructure and services are therefore uncertain and not very clear, even when the performance of the services begins and concludes within their territory, as for example, the performance of telephone or Internet access services. Going beyond the neighborhood impact the study could lead the municipalities to be legally classified as usurpers of the Federal Government's powers. In view of this context, what position has Salvador, the third largest city in Brazil, adopted? This is what we shall see below, by means of the analysis of its Organic Law and of its Master Plano Diretor de Desenvolvimento Urbano (PDDU) – Plan for Urban De-

velopment, documents that, in principle, and especially the second one, should express its conception and strategies for infrastructure, socio-economic and cultural development.

Telecommunications Infrastructure and Services (TIS) and the Future of Salvador

In this section we attempt to find out how Salvador plans to assert its power, with reference to the regulation, concession and supervision of telecommunications infrastructure and services, within its territorial extent. That is, what policies for this sector are expressed in its Organic Law and in its PDDU.

The Organic Law, in article 7, provides the authority for commanding urban activities, defining conditions and times for the functioning of industrial, commercial and service-providing establishments, with the city being responsible also for “granting, renewing or revoking permits for location and operation”. These are apparently exclusive powers, but in some situations they conflict with attributions of the Federal Government, as is the case, for example, of banking hours, not recognized by the High Court of Appeals as being under the jurisdiction of the city, but rather of the Central Bank.

Linking its urban development policy to fulfillment of the City’s social functions and to its inhabitants’ property and welfare, the Law orders the city to provide public services, either directly or by a concession system. However, it does not define which public services these are and whether among them there could be some that are linked to telecommunications services.

On the other hand, the PDDU is explicit with regard to the comprehension of the roles that the city attributes to the TIS factor and how it links it to its development and to its inhabitants’ well being. It also confesses to suggesting some type of usurpation of federal power that, facing everyday the effects resulting from the national economy’s lack of response to the demands placed upon it, the city has no way of excluding from its action sectors not necessarily under its jurisdiction.

It also recognizes that there are barriers to the development of the telecommunications field, specifying (together with the electric power field) disproportions between the readjustment of the rates and the population's payment capability, and considers as a negative factor the moving of this sector's decision centers to other regions of the country¹⁰.

It forecasts a growth rate for Telecommunications of 6.48% until 2010, believing that the concessionaires will carry out the large investments that the city needs for overcoming its technological backwardness¹¹.

Among the plan's proposals are those for supplying business service centers with infrastructure networks (transportation and telecommunications) and guaranteeing easy access to global markets for local entrepreneurs and companies.

In the Communication and Entertainment sector the idea is to invest in an infrastructure for training people to apply information technologies in the creation, production and distribution of cultural products; training editors, publishers, directors and artists for capability in the digital areas; and encouraging the organization of companies for sound effects and production of events, especially in the segments of theatrical arts and production of spectacles, events and mega-events, like Carnival.

With reference to Telecommunications Infrastructure, the PDDU establishes, as the first Guideline, raising the quantitative standards of supply and continuing implementation of the systems' expansion and modernization programs. For this purpose, it sets out various actions, among which: installation of multi-service boxes, composed of telephone terminals, computer terminal with access to the Internet, terminal for access to cable TV, etc.; implementation of the City's own

¹⁰ The telephone companies, for example, have regional call centers, servicing several states at the same time.

¹¹ In fact the telecommunications sector developed at a growth rate below that, what forced the federal government to announce, in the beginning of 2010, the revival of Telebrás – the state company that provided telecommunications services until 1997, when those services were privatized.

stations, with towers and antennas for connection of user access terminals and connection between existing networks; implementation of the Expansion Plan – which aims at an increase of 10,235 thousand accesses, rising from 1,350 thousand in 1999 to 11,585 thousand in 2015; establishment of plans for supplying data communications accesses with medium and high transmission capacity; expansion of networks for access to users' terminals; geographic distribution of the expansion of telecommunications accesses in the various districts of the city; and expansion of the cable TV network, utilizing the capillarity of the existing optical network, enabling the implementation of new services for access to the Internet.

The second Guideline proposes the establishment of technical conditions, for the purpose of disciplining the implementation of networks, stations, antennas, among other equipment, referring to the various systems of telecommunications, by means of legal instruments and international/national norms, with the participation of the Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas (ABNT) – Brazilian Association of Technical Norms, the Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações (ANATEL) – National Telecommunications Agency, companies in the sector, universities, the State Government, the Municipal Government and other interested agents. The actions that the city intends to develop in this connection include: the definition of legal instruments for disciplining the implementation of the different telecommunications systems and the establishment of norms and parameters for supervision of the processes of implementation of these systems and making them operational.

Article 152 of the PDDU establishes that in the articulation with the Federal Government and the State, seeking the implementation of its guidelines and proposals, Salvador will try to contribute to the decentralization of the exercising of authority by the three levels of government, along the lines of an organic equilibrium in the distribution of responsibilities and resources, power to make decisions and to execute, with emphasis on collaboration and subsidiary and governmental contribution. In addition, it will encourage reciprocal cooperation with other municipalities in the performance of services and in regional and

local development, through the utilization of consortiums and the establishment of associations.

In a proposal that necessarily leads to the progress of the so-called e-government – already practiced by the Municipal Government and the City Council – article 155 says that the City will establish decentralized systems for service to the citizens in the provision of information of interest to them, in the receipt of tax payments, in the issuance of certificates, in the receipt and forwarding of denunciations and complaints regarding public services and those of use to the public. One of the items of this same article also indicates that one of the means to be utilized for this purpose will be the Internet.

Policies and Strategies

This section discusses the policies expressed by the city of Salvador, by means of its Organic Law and its Master Plan, from the point of view of four aspects: (1) roles it attributes to telecommunications infrastructure and services in the City's development; (2) roles reserved for the government and the market, with reference to the diversity of the supplying of information; (3) strategies underlying the guidelines traced in the policies; and (4) posture with respect to the economic conditioning of the adoption of these technologies by the poorer classes of the population.

Roles attributed to the TIS factor • The Organic Law does not make any reference to this factor. The PDDU, in turn, attributes several roles to the communications technologies: in economic growth, when referring to the encouragement of new undertakings; in social revitalization, as a way to provide for the population's well being; in *e-government*, when it establishes, in article 155, that the City will have decentralized systems of service for the citizens, in the providing of information of interest to them, making it available on the Internet; and in the quality of life, with reference to education, leisure and recreation.

Although the Plan emphasizes that educational policy involves not only formal education but also non-formal, there is only a brief mention of the encouragement of the so-called “Educommunication” projects, choosing priorities in the public communications channels, such as the radio and television of the Instituto de Radiodifusão Educativa da Bahia (IRDEB) - Radio Broadcasting Institute of the State of Bahia¹². It should be emphasized that in the city of São Paulo “Educommunications” is the subject of a specific law. In the proposals for cultural policies, these media are practically not given any consideration, there being references only to movie theaters and video. In the specific guidance by fields and sectors for the process of implementation of the PDDU there is reference to the creation of specific lines of financing, benefiting, among the cultural segments, movie, video and record production and educational and cultural radio and television of a non-commercial character (Annex a89).

Public and private • Although there is no mention of the relation between market initiatives and public policies in the Organic Law of Salvador, the PDDU recognizes the need for alignment with market initiatives, so that changes occur and policies are implemented. With reference to the encouragement of diversity in the providing of information, article 70, which deals with the PDDU’s specific objectives, declares that Salvador will maintain, in secure and diversified conditions, offers of space for installation of economic activities that are in accord with the new cycle in the Brazilian economy and with its metropolitan region, which, although it does not specify the ICTs, characterizes an eclectic, competitive opening to the emerging demands.

In article 75, which provides the general content of the Development Policy, mention is made of the continuity of investments in telecommunications, a sector considered to be of strategic importance in the support of the economic activities located in Salvador. And in article 77, which deals with the Master Plan’s guidelines and proposals,

¹² IRDEB is a foundation belonging to the State of Bahia that controls a radio station, *Rádio Educativa*, and a TV station, *TV Educativa*, both legally established as educational radio broadcasting and therefore with non-commercial programming.

appears the expansion and modernization of the local base for business services, among which R&D is mentioned. The guideline for implementing telecommunications infrastructure networks in the business service centers is associated with this. The expectation begins to be that greater social interaction, access to global culture and competitive advantages will be assured.

In an item entitled “Requirements for insertion of the Salvador economy in the flexible production and intangible values system”, a guideline appears that mentions the increase in the use of information and of knowledge, encouraging and enabling technological innovation, in addition to the expansion of the local government’s action in attracting projects and obtaining new investments, cooperating in this way with the diffusion of new technologies

Strategies • In the Organic Law of Salvador it is not possible to detect any indication of strategy. In the PDDU, several strategies are explicit, on the same level of importance: Economic Development, which presupposes investment in telecommunications, a sector considered to be of strategic importance in the support of the City’s economic activities; Social Development, which presupposes integration of the policies aimed at confronting the critical conditions present in the employment of manpower, in the population’s income level and in its exclusion; Spatial Organization, which presupposes expansion in the servicing of the less-benefited areas with high rates of exclusion and segregation; and Political and Institutional Development, which presupposes the promotion of education for citizenship.

In addition, the presence is noted, together with the economic components, of social, cultural, environmental and management references, in all the fields and aspects covered by the PDDU.

The economic question of the access to the ICTs • The Municipal Organic Law of Salvador does not specify anything with respect to the ICTs, although it contains a guarantee of access for all the municipal citizens, in a fair and equalitarian way, to the public goods and services that assure the essential conditions for a dignified existence.

On the other hand, the PDDU mentions in several of its articles ways for expanding the society's participation in the services, and a certain emphasis is perceptible when it is a question of telecommunications and information. It highlights the need for extinguishing the existing differences between the majorities and the minorities of the society. This is clear in article 68, dealing with the General Objectives of Development, which points to a greater equality and to the reduction of the social exclusion existing in large segments of the local population, through expansion of the access to opportunities for work and income, all-inclusive coverage, equality and reliability of the services that promote their qualification. In article 70, which deals with the Specific Objectives, mention is made of raising the levels of accessibility to goods and services offered by the City, for most of the population, with emphasis on the means of mass transportation and communications.

Article 10, annex 3 of the PDDU, which deals with Challenges and Prospects for the Development of Salvador, declares that the supply of telecommunications, present and forecasted, satisfies the estimated demand and presents as a possible problem high rates with relation to the population's purchasing power. Another problem is the possible delay in investments in the sector, due to the moving of the center of decisions from Salvador to other regions¹³.

Conclusion

The conceptual and contextual elements presented here and the analysis of the data collected suggest that the municipality of Salvador, recognizing the value of scientific and technological development in the telecommunications area, proposes to act and enter the debate on the expansion of its powers to the decision-making processes of this sector. It began to awaken to the fact that the conglomeration, on

¹³ An example that clearly illustrates this problem is that which occurred with the telephone companies Telebahia Celular (now Vivo) and Tim Maxitel (now Tim) that were "merged" with larger groups. These companies' decisions are made outside the State, in São Paulo, where their holding companies are located.

the national and international levels, of companies that are active in telecommunications infrastructure and services prevents a significant supply of diversified services, on the local level. That is to say, the total control of the infrastructure and of a significant portion of the services, on the part of these conglomerates, leaves little room for the creation and development of electronic information and telecommunications services and products, outside the Brazilian companies/multinational companies' axis.

It is a well-known fact that the regulations that express the national public policies for the sector do not establish mechanisms for protection nor for encouragement of the local and regional production of information by electronic means, in any of its forms¹⁴. In addition, the globalization of the control of telecommunications infrastructure and services imposes standards of production and management based on the global market economy, which require the use of cutting-edge technology and a large volume of financial resources. Accordingly, information products and services created on the local level are forced to follow a high standard of operation and of generation and commercialization of products, under penalty of being condemned to extinction. The issue is of a political nature and has a direct relation to culture, identity, autonomy and economic, scientific and technological development, as Schiller (1993) puts it:

“[...] how much power do we wish to cede to private corporations in the determination of our economic, political and overall cultural life? Information is, as we know, a generic term covering everything from bank checking data to television shows and from government databases to education, to plant and animal genes. Over what stretch of this giant range do we want the corporate economy to reign? Over what span should private judgments about resource allocation and use be permitted to become dominant?” (p. 205).

¹⁴ Even the constitutional provision for regionalizing the production of radio and TV programs has still not been regulated by law, almost 20 years after the promulgation of the Federal Constitution, whose art. 221 expressly ordered the “regionalizing of cultural, artistic and journalistic production, in accordance with percentages established by law”.

These considerations indicate the need for the formulation of objective, analytic proposals regarding the so-called Information Society, consistent with the real scenario of the economic, political and social relations that are established in the local, national and international contexts. Deeper studies that integrate views of several fields of knowledge regarding the transformations that are occurring in the contemporary world are essential in order to comprehend the objective reality in which the relations between citizens, governments and local interest groups take place, under the new conditions imposed by the advanced information and telecommunications technologies.

With reference specifically to the limits of the City's power in Brazil, Salvador's example reveals, in the first place, that the basic legislation of the three levels of the Brazilian federation – federal and state constitutions and municipal organic laws – were promulgated previous to the emergence of the ICTs in everyday life in Brazil. For this reason there is no direct mention of them in that legislation. The PDDU, in turn, launched in 2004, now clearly relates the role of telecommunications infrastructure and services to Salvador's economic and social development, emphasizing this role.

Indirectly, however, and because they deal with broad fundamental issues for life in society, the federal and state constitutions establish entrance ways for the ICTs on assuring basic rights such as education and the exercising of citizenship, which increasingly occurs based on the mastery by the citizens of these technologies and the information they circulate. Access to them, therefore, is basic to the fulfillment of those rights, it being the State's duty to guarantee the access. But in the Organic Law of Salvador, it is not possible to establish, even indirectly, a positioning with respect to the ICTs.

As to the alignment of public policies with market initiatives, it is possible to perceive that in the Federal Constitution there is the concern with encouragement of private enterprise, but also with acting as a supplementary agent where that enterprise does not exist, or is insufficient. In the State Constitution, the State appears to be more present in the encouragement of companies than in acting directly in technological

development. And the PDDU seems to place its bets on the responsibility shared by the public and private sectors and the third sector.

It is curious that in the debates held in 17 Administrative Regions, with the participation of municipal government representatives and community leaders, questions relating to telecommunications were not raised. The only exception was in the Pau de Lima meeting, where the need for implementation of an infocenter was mentioned (Salvador, 2005). This could suggest that the population does not associate the PDDU with telecommunications policies, perhaps due to the fact that their coordinators, generally architects, emphasize the aspects of housing, transportation, work opportunities and environment.

However, it should be mentioned that the Architects Institute of Bahia (IAB), in a document entitled "Contribution of the IAB to the debate on the PDDU", makes a clear criticism of the fact that the plan does not present more advanced proposals in the application of the ICTs. The document points out that the PDDU "does not explore the potentialities of the new technologies, the new meanings of 'network society' or 'smart city', as for example the adoption of the wireless wide band Internet, shared with the community" (IAB, 2004, p. 41).

Very different is the situation of the small municipality of Piraí, in the State of Rio de Janeiro, with 23,600 inhabitants, that is an example of digital inclusion and that in 2005 won the Top Seven Intelligent Communities Award in New York. Since February 2004, the municipality has inaugurated a Hybrid System with Wireless Support (SHSW) network. The proposal for Piraí's PDDU, debated in November 2004, provided explicitly for a Digital Communications Infrastructure and Services Policy, "in order to provide the right to information and to access to this network, as a public asset" (Piraí, 2006).

Although scheduled to guide the policies for development and expansion of the city until 2012, Salvador's PDDU entered into a process of revision a little more than one year after its approval. The argument used by the new mayor was that its approval did not satisfy the legal requirement of wide participation by the citizens in its discussion, as established in the Statute of the City. Expectations are that a new version will be submitted to the City Council by the end of 2006.

In short, it is certain that there are several limitations on the exercise of Salvador's municipal power in the telecommunications sector. The will to overcome them depends only partially on documental manifestations of proposals. It is necessary – and in reality, crucial – that such proposals are followed by actions and movement that lead to the occupation of institutional spaces, as the cities of Campinas, São Paulo and João Pessoa, among others, have already done or tried to do. Only in this way will it be possible for Salvador to assure control over decision-making processes regarding provision, concession, supervision and evaluation of this sector's infrastructure and services.

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Fábio Ferreira

An analysis of Salvador within the global/creative city framework¹

Introduction

During the last decade changes in society related to technological innovation, occupation distribution, culture, economy and space were considered the sign for the coming of an information society. This text will not discuss the arguments and critiques related to the information society as a concept, but will focus on one of its elements, redesign of space, in order to stress the importance of cities in the network society². Then, two perspectives related to cities will be discussed: global cities and creative cities. The text will then summarize some of the characteristics of a global/creative city and analyze the city of Salvador according to the elements enlisted in the summary. This analysis will

¹ Previous versions of this paper were presented and or published elsewhere, and most of the data was not updated since the article was first written.

² For a deeper understanding of the information society, please refer to: Garham (2004), Hephworth and Robins (1988), Castells (2000a), Castells (2000b), Castells (2000c), Webster et al (2004), and Robins (1999)

provide some indication of how far/close Salvador is from the theoretical assumptions related to the global/creative cities perspectives.

Redefinition of Space

In order to understand the role of cities in a 'digital economy' the first step is to understand how new technologies are redefining space and time, through the use of information and communication technologies, and allowing enhanced connectivity in spite of distance barriers.

According to Mitchell (1995) information technologies allow the virtualization of space and enhanced mobility. He notices that products and goods are manufactured in different parts of the world in an orchestrated operation, thanks to the telecommunication revolution, miniaturization of electronics, commodification of bits and domination of software over material forms. Mitchell (1995) envisions the restructuring of space in such a way that an electronic agora made of computer networks will redefine our concept of gathering places, community and urban life; in fact, in his view, computer networks redefine space, identities, and subjectivities without the constraints of material space (Mitchell, 1995). This redefinition of space can be represented in the telephone that links a person to determined locations (material spaces), the internet that connects a person to undetermined locations (virtual sphere), and the construction of computer identities that have no embodiment and are simply virtual (Mitchell, 1995).

Castells (2000a) argues that time and space are both fundamental to human life because people organize their daily activities around tasks they perform in a particular time, and relations they establish in a particular space. Space, according to Castells (2000a), was initially a barrier for the expansion of social relations, but the evolution in transports and telecommunication allowed humanity to challenge space with more effectiveness (Castells, 2000a). When telecommunications converged with computers, production started to be redefined and became more flexible and decentralized, but, at the same time, control of it became easily concentrated in core areas. This dynamic of decentralization and

control created a new spatial logic, the space of flows, in which the information economy is organized around command and control centers that coordinate innovation and manage activities from network cities.

In fact, Castells (2000a) identifies a new industrial space that is characterized by production in different locations, united by telecommunications, and organized around flexible and hierarchical spaces of production (this can be considered a new spatial division of labor)³. In such spaces, R&D, innovation and prototyping are concentrated in the highly industrial centers; skilled fabrication (assembling) is concentrated in the new industrial areas in developed countries; semi-skilled, large scale assembling is concentrated in Asia and in the rest of the developing world; and finally, customization and after sales services are concentrated within core regional areas (Castells, 2000a). He argues that these new industrial spaces are organized around flows, not places, and that their command centers are located in specific areas that concentrate advanced service infrastructures, and generate the necessary spatial proximity for the 'milieu' of innovation to take place (Castells, 2000a).

Mosco (1996) also recognizes profound changes in the configuration of space. His analysis starts with capitalism's desire to overcome spatial barriers. According to him, the process of spatialization is an attempt of capital to overcome the constraints of space and time in social life, in order to complete its search for more markets, sources of revenues and expansion. Particularly in communication industries, the process of spatialization is significant and in this case Mosco (1996) refers to the large conglomerate concentration and expansion in the sector. Mosco's (1996) recognizes the role of communication and information technologies, plus transportation, as essential to allow control of global operations within a conglomerate; in fact, in Mosco's perspective, integration means control, compression of time and space and centralized decision making. Mosco (1996) argues that communication technologies expand the range of locations but also intensify the role of central nodes; spatialization involves decentralization of production but concen-

³ Friedmann (1986) refers to the world city hypothesis as a new international division of labor. This perception is shared by both Castells (2000a) and Sassen (2000).

tration of control and that is why certain cities such as New York, London and Tokyo emerge as spaces that agglomerate business activities and economic power. But what allows this concentration? Sassen (2000) identifies three main reasons for centralization in specific locations and cities: social connectivity – centers concentrate resources, infrastructure, and people; need for enormous resources, which can be easily supplied at clusters; and denationalization of the corporate elite⁴.

Then, it is possible to say that due to the logic of decentralization/control certain cities emerge as important centers in the information society. Although there are several approaches that would allow us to approach the city, such as the global cities (Mosco, 1996; Sassen, 2000), information cities (Castells, 1989), creative cities (Florida, 2005), city of bits (Mitchell, 1995) or megacities (Castells, 2000a), this paper will concentrate on two of these perspectives (global and creative cities) in order to synthesize indicators to compare Salvador with.

Global and creative cities

According to Mosco (1996) “global cities and regional blocs rise in prominence at the expense of a nation state that is, at once, too large to provide the concentrated personal and information power of the global city and too small to govern continental blocs”⁵ (p. 206). In his view, certain cities have an essential role in the current economy, and in most cases they are the central nodes that connect global corporate operations. Castells (2000a), on the other hand, demonstrates that certain cities connect to others in a global scale, the same way nodes connect networks. However, as he indicates, the dominance of certain nodes (locations) is expected because specific circuits are preferred to carry the global flows, generating a fierce intercity and hierarchical competition among cities.

⁴ Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is an important element of Sassen’s analysis

⁵ Note that this paper is not expanding on the discussing of whether or not, the national state is loosing relevance (I particularly think it is not).

According to Castells (2000a), some cities are successful because they were traditionally centers for international trade and banking; they have highly concentrated command points; they are key locations for finance and specialized firms; they are the sites for innovation and the markets for the products of innovation. Castells (2000a) defines the global city in the following terms:

The global city is not a place, but a process. A process by which centers of production and consumption of advanced services, and their ancillary local societies, are connected in a global network, while simultaneously downplaying the linkages with their hinterlands, on the basis of information flows (p. 417)

Being a business center is a main characteristic of global cities, and they can evolve to what Castells (2000a) refers as megacities, which, connect major regions; have more than one million inhabitants; concentrate managerial and upper commands of firms; are centers of economic, technological and social dynamism in their countries; are centers of cultural and political innovation; and provide connections to global networks of every kind. In fact, according to Castells, a global city is the arena where capital, innovation, technology, organizational interactions, sounds and symbols can flow within a network of technological infrastructure, ancillary services and specialized/professional labor forces.

Sassen (2000) defines global cities as sites for certain activities and functions, in an economy that combines dispersed economic activities, global integration and concentration of economic ownership and control. Expressing a view similar to Castells (2000a) and Mosco (1996), she characterizes global cities as command points and as key locations and markets for the leading industries such as financial firms, advanced corporate service firms, banks and headquarters of transnational corporations (Sassen, 2000). Sassen (2000) defines global cities as “strategic sites for the management of the global economy and the production of the most advanced services and financial operations” (p. 21). Sassen’s core idea is based on the assumption that rather than losing importance by the dispersal that information technologies allow,

certain cities are becoming centers of command since they are “post-industrial production sites for leading industries of this period (finance and specialized services) and are transnational marketplaces where firms and government from all over the world can buy financial instruments and specialized services” (p. 22). Contrary to Castells (2000a), who envisions competition between global cities, Sassen (2000) believes that they do not compete against each other and operate in a complementary system of specialized locations, in which transnational processes take place. In other words, business and financial centers strengthen the ties with each other as they dissociated themselves from the national urban systems.

Florida (2005) uses not only a different name, creative cities, to conceptualize the city, but also provides a different methodology since his explanations account for non-economic or technological factors as decisive in the emergence of a particular city in the information economy. According to Florida (2005), cities are cauldrons of creativity because they concentrate and mobilize human creative energy, which is transformed into technical and artistic innovation, new forms of commerce/industry and evolving paradigms of community and civilization. The way people organize their families, their time and their work in the search of a creative process is important to Florida’s (2005) analysis, and a specific set of activities are considered essential: science and engineering, research and development, technology based industries, art, culture, design, health care, finance and law. Florida’s belief in human potential is essentially embedded in a view in which the economy is meant to realize human capabilities, and an open and non-discriminatory culture is essential for the achievement of a higher level of social development.

In Florida’s (2005) view the attractiveness of a city depends not only on technology but also on tolerance and talent, which compose his three Ts for a creative city. By tolerance Florida (2005) means openness to different cultures, inclusiveness and diversity of people, ethnicities and race⁶. By talent, he measures things such as the number of people within a city with a bachelor degree or above. By technology he means

⁶ He created the gay index to measure tolerance

innovation and technology industry concentration. According to Florida's analysis those three Ts are essential for a city to become a creative and global center. It is worth noting that talent is the factor that allows the substitution of physical labor by knowledge and creativity and that stimulates innovation through the use of technology in the organization of resources (preferably in an open and peer to peer oriented environment). Florida (2005) believes that talent is one of the most important elements for a city success and that is why it is important to determine what motivates talented people to move to certain locations. In relation to this, Florida (2005) concludes that talented people move to a certain place in the search of lifestyle and, in many cases, a clean environment, amenities and a bohemian lifestyle, and other elements that are in many cases more relevant than salary. Finally, according to him, the cities that are successful in attracting and maintaining talent will be the winners in the coming of an information economy.

The short review of the literature on global and creative cities above provides some indication of elements that a city should have in order to become a global/creative node. The next table summarizes the main characteristics of global/creative cities (later these characteristics will be contrasted to the concrete case of Salvador):

Characteristics of a digital/global city
Central nodes of information and production flows
Specialized workforce – talent (that can provide advanced services)
Financial service headquarters
Advanced communication and information infrastructure and hyperconcentration of facilities
Innovation in technology (strong information industry)
Innovation in culture
Availability of entertainment options (bohemian lifestyle and amenities)
Tolerance
Vocation to be a service city rather than a manufacturing district

Chart 1 - Characteristics of a Global/Creative City
 Source: From the author based on the literature.

Salvador as Global/Creative City

Salvador is a 456-year-old city located in the northeast of Brazil. It is the capital of the state of Bahia and it was the first capital of the former Portuguese empire in Brazil. According to an estimative from Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) - Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, in 2005 Salvador had 2.673.560 residents; it has now almost 3.000.000 inhabitants, a number that is expected to grow in the next years. In addition, according to IBGE's Monthly Research on Employment as of March/2003 Salvador's population had a medium income of R\$ 789.40 (about \$ 347.00)⁷. Salvador had the highest rate of unemployment within Brazil's capitals (according to the municipality strategic plan this persists for about nine years now). This is in part a consequence of the high concentration of wealth within the city, and the risk that this concentration increases with the coming of new information technologies is a reality since the gap between rich and poor should increase. The creative/global city perspective is then a possible alternative for the city development, and may lead the city towards a solution for its job crisis and maybe foster its sustainable development in the future.

Traditionally, the main business activities in the city are commerce and services, and, according to the city's administration webpage, commerce is the traditional predisposition of Salvador since its foundation. In fact, Salvador has never had any significant industrial sector, and data from IBGE indicates that of a total of 56.025 existing business in 2001, 44% were related to commerce, 20% to real state and services for corporations, and only 4% were related to industrial production. The main industrial areas of the state of Bahia are located in two places close to Salvador: the petrochemical complex at Camaçari and the Industrial Center of Aratu⁸, both within less than one hour drive from Bahia's capital. IBGE's statistics from 2003 makes the point for Salvador as

⁷ As of 06/16/06 a dollar was 2.27 reais

⁸ The Industrial complex in Aratu is deactivated and just a few industries still exist in there. The petrochemical complex in Camaçari.

a service city even more evident. When measuring the contribution of industries of a hundred municipalities to the country's gross domestic product, São Paulo appears as number one with its industries contributing with 8.9% of the total, followed by Rio de Janeiro with 2.95%, and Manaus with 2.49%. The city of Camaçari in Bahia appears as number 6, contributing with 1.54%. Salvador appears as number 39, with .44% of contribution, while the two cities that compete economically with Salvador in the north/northeast, Fortaleza and Recife, appears in number 22 (with .67%) and 29 (with .59%) respectively. The situation is quite different when IBGE measures the contribution of services to the gross domestic product. São Paulo maintains the first place with 13.07% of contribution, followed by Rio de Janeiro with 6.45%, and Brasília with 5.00%. Salvador comes in seventh place with 1.19%, followed by Recife with 1.10%. Fortaleza comes in the eleventh place with a contribution of 1.04%. This data demonstrate Salvador's tendency to be a service center rather than an industrial one.

In relation to education, until recently, the only federal university (Universidade Federal da Bahia – UFBA) in the state was located in Salvador⁹, and that is an important advantage to the city, given the importance of UFBA for research carried in the state of Bahia. In addition to the Federal University there is a state university (Universidade do Estado da Bahia – UNEB), which also has a leading role in preparing qualified workers and in doing research. There are several private universities and schools that although significant in terms of educating people, do not have an important share in research. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that private universities such as Universidade Salvador – UNIFACS, Universidade Jorge Amado – UNIJORGE and Universidade Católica do Salvador – UCSAL also carry some research and some of them increased its efforts in this area.

Still in respect to education, according to IBGE, in 2003 the enrollments in higher education in the city were as follow: 3.295 at UNEB), 18.601 at UFBA, and 62.786 at private schools/universities; a total of

⁹ Just recently a new Federal University was opened in the Reconcavo region (countryside of the state of Bahia)

84.682 enrollments in the year of 2003. Still according to the IBGE, in 2003 the city had a total of 8.423 professors distributed as follow: 1.300 in the state university, 2.309 in the federal university, and 4.814 in the private schools/universities.

The lack of financial headquarters¹⁰ within the city is a relevant issue because it may imply fewer funding sources for technology startups and other entrepreneurial initiatives. Even though, the major financial institutions are present in the city (with a total of 204 branches in 2003 according to IBGE). There is also an agency specialized in funding/promoting initiatives related to development in Bahia, Desenbahia, and a federal bank, Banco do Nordeste - Bank of Northeast which fund small businesses within the Northeast of the country. Nevertheless, the 1997 issue of *Maiores e Melhores* from the *Exame* magazine¹¹ does not indicate the existence of major banks' headquarters in Salvador.

In terms of cultural innovation, the state and the city have a leading role in the nation and internationally recognized artists/singer/writer/etc. such as Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Jorge Amado, Castro Alves, Gregório de Matos and others were born in the state of Bahia. Even if in some cases artists are/were not from Salvador, they maintain a close relationship to the capital of the state. Besides, the carnival industry is a strong business that generates a great amount of jobs and revenues for both the city administration and the companies that operate it. At the same time, it helps to promote a vibrant and active music scene especially for *axé* music. For example, according to a ranking from the Brazilian Association of Recording Industry, in 2004, Ivete Sangalo (singer) and AraKetu (music group) had their CDs among the top sellers in the country. Salvador's carnival, which generally takes place at the end of February, is a huge popular event. It generally endures almost seven days, in which local artists go around designated areas of the

¹⁰ The bank that was owned by the state, BANEB, Bank of the State of Bahia, was privatized during the late 90's and the private group that had its origin in the city, Economico, bankrupt within the same period after a financial scandal.

¹¹ *Exame* is major business publication in the country. Every year they publish a special edition *Melhores e Maiores* (Biggest and Best) which analyze and enlist the biggest corporations in Brazil per industry, as well as the best practices among those corporations.

city playing *axé* songs. The artists perform in *trio elétricos* (electric trios, which are big trucks with sound equipment) and people follow them on the streets. During carnival, many seasonal jobs are created and the tourism and entertainment industry makes huge money from both locals and tourists (national and international). In addition, Salvador has many kilometers of beaches, restaurants (and a unique cuisine), first class hotels, parks, and some of the most important historical sights in Brazil.

In a 2005 Fundação Getúlio Vargas from Rio de Janeiro FGV-RJ's¹² research on best cities to work in Brazil, Salvador appears as number eleventh. The first place went to São Paulo, followed by Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte. Recife appeared in number four and was considered by the research as the best city in the northeast. The strong points of Recife were the fact that it was considered a center for medicine, technology and business consultancies. Fortaleza, another prominent city in the northeast appeared one level above Salvador, in the 10th place. Fortaleza's strong points were tourism and commerce. Salvador's strongest point in the research was tourism; with special attention to the city hospitality (we may say openness and receptiveness). Note that Recife was considered strong in the areas Salvador's strategic plan proposes to achieve primacy in the north/northeast region.

In terms of government actions, the city administration wishes to transform Salvador into a creative city, as is expressed, for example at Salvador's Strategic Plan. At this plan, the city's administration considered that culture, science and technology, and tourism, would make of Salvador a creative place. In its Technological Innovation section, Salvador's strategic plan states as a priority to transform Salvador into a digital metropolis with both national and international connections, that would provide specialized services and headquarter clean industries. In order to achieve these objectives the city can rely on its strong cultural industry described above, on its universities and research centers. Also, according to the plan, institutions such as the Centro Integrado de Man-

¹² One of the leading administration schools in the country. Note that the results of the research on the best cities to work was published in the business magazine *Voce SA* in July 2005

ufatura e Tecnologia (CIMATEC) could provide training in areas such as telecommunication, computers networks and other information related industries and may help to build a technological cluster.

The state government is also investing in a project¹³ to develop a fiber optics network in Bahia that should be used mostly for educational and research purposes. The project is intended to start at Salvador's metropolitan region, and envisions connecting in a high-speed network the metropolitan region to the interior of the state. Another major project from the state government is the Tecnovia, Bahia's technology park, which is under construction and will be located at Salvador (enhancing the city's capabilities in ICTs, biotechnology and energy).

The cultural and tourism part of the city's project is in accordance to its traditional potentials but the technology related parts will demand more efforts because, for example, of the low number of larges information industries in the city. The lack of information industries is evident in the *InfoExame*¹⁴ listing of the 200 biggest technology companies in the country for the year of 2002. Among those 200 corporations, only three were from Salvador, Tele Leste Celular in the 42^o position, Unitech in the 130^o position, and Lebre in the 179^o position.

The NGOs, in regard to technology, are concerned with issues related to access and they are putting together some concrete actions to overcome the digital divide in the city through the use of digital inclusion as an attempt to enhance citizenship. That is the case of, Comitê para Democratização da Informação (CDI) - Committee for the Democratization of Information, which is a nationwide NGO that uses the strategy of partnership with community leaders to build telecenters in poor neighborhoods of Salvador. Other examples are the Cidade Mãe (a project sponsored by the city), and the EIC Liceu, both initiatives that offer training in information technologies in an attempt to educate/qualify young kids that otherwise would be marginalized (Jambeiro et al, 2004). Borges (2006) in a presentation of her thesis project makes a deep analysis of NGOs involved in overcoming the digital divide in

¹³ Rede Baiana de Alta Velocidade – REBAV – Bahia's High Speed Network

¹⁴ *InfoExame* is a publication specialized in informatics and the information industry.

Salvador. According to her, organizations such as OAF, Steve Biko, Liceu de Artes e Ofícios, Illê Aiye, Odara and Ghandi Mirin, see the access to and use of technology as a mean to enhance citizenship. It should also be stressed that several NGOs (including some of the ones mentioned here) have an important role within the city’s cultural scene.

With the information above it is possible to compare Salvador’s data to the indicators summarized in chart 1 (characteristics of a global/creative city). This comparison is summarized in the next chart:

Characteristics of a global/creative city	Does Salvador have this characteristic?
Central nodes of information and production flows	No
Specialized workforce – talent (that can provide advanced services)	Yes
Financial service headquarters	No
Advanced communication and information infrastructure and hyperconcentration of facilities	No
Innovation in technology (strong information industry)	No
Innovation in culture	Yes
Availability of entertainment options (bohemian lifestyle and amenities)	Yes
Tolerance	Yes
Vocation to be a service city rather than a manufacturing district	Yes

Chart 2 - Salvador as global/creative city
Source: From the author.

Although Salvador has an operating telecommunication infrastructure, in terms of advanced communication and information services it is not possible to say that the city has a hyperconcentration of ICT infrastructure and facilities or is a central node in the global arena.

The city also does not have a concentration of financial institutions headquarters (as demonstrated by the *Exame* data), a sector that is essential in guaranteeing and stimulating the flows to which both Castells (2000a) and Sassen (2000) refer to.

Another problematic area is the absence of a strong information industry in the city (as indicated by the *InfoExame* data), therefore it is necessary to follow with care the actions proposed both by the municipality and the state in order to see how effective those investments will be in attracting/creating information industries. Maybe a way of stimulating the creation of this cluster is providing opportunities for young engineers and business graduates to initiate startups, which would be an opportunity to explore the talents generated in the city. The city potential as a service provider can also stimulate this transition and its strong bohemian environment and amenities represented by its bars, music, historical sites and natural beauty may stimulate the migration and retention of talent (as well tourism). Also, the fact that the city is perceived as a good place to live and work may also attract talented people from other regions of the country. In this case, improving the city's quality of life should be an important strategy (not the only one) to retain local talent and to attract it from elsewhere.

The local universities may help Salvador become a global/creative place via the creation of a local talent base; via research; and the attraction of talented people from other states (in this case partnerships with funding agencies are essential).

The city may be considered open for different cultures as a consequence of its tourism potential and its multiethnic formation, which also help Salvador to be more tolerant, even if in this particular matter there are problems related to racial/class divides and poverty.

Finally, one of the city's big strength is its culture and the capacity of its people to innovate in this field (notably in music, as demonstrated earlier).

Some Conclusions

The review on global and creative cities demonstrates that certain regions have a central role in the information society. It also is clear that information and communication technologies are useful to decentralize production but also allow the centralization of control in core areas. It is important, however, to remember that the same technologies that allow control also provide opportunities for development and citizen's empowerment (Kellner, 1999).

Many cities around the world are concerned about their destiny and sustainability as at least regional influence zones and are adopting initiatives to become part of the exclusive group of global and creative cities, and Salvador is among them.

When Salvador's current capabilities and future potentials are compared to the summary drawn from the literature it is evident that there is an absence of a strong information industry, but also that the city has a high potential as an entertainment, tourism and cultural arena. Some initiatives are being adopted by Salvador's administration, the state government, industry and non-governmental organizations as an attempt to catch up with the leading global and creative cities. Salvador's strategy is mainly concerned in constituting itself as a regional (in the North/Northeast of Brazil) node and creative center, which is also connected globally (this evident in the municipality's strategic planning). In order to do so, the city should be in direct competition with two other cities in the northeast: Recife and Fortaleza.

The idea of fostering a technological and cultural cluster in order to become a creative city may pay-off for Salvador in the future. However, to achieve success, it is important that the project do not lose sight of a few aspects.

It is important that to consolidate and enhance the integration business and university, and industry and research centers (this integration is an essential feature of creative and global cities). With a well-integrated industry/university complex, investment in research and technology may reproduce itself.

It is also important that the different levels of government establish/maintain synergy among their different projects. This would implicate in coordination among the different projects such as the federal Rede Nacional de Pesquisa (RNP)¹⁵ - National Research Network, the state government technology park and digital projects, and the municipality plan to make of Salvador a creative city (this synergy would guarantee concentration of efforts and investments).

Finally, it is important to invest at and expand the city's strong cultural industry, and develop its tourism potential. It is also important to explore the city's tradition in service and commerce as a means to make the transition to a creative/global city.

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3

Digital inclusion and e-government policies

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Access to the information in e-gov portals as presupposition for digital inclusion

Introduction

This text presents the results of the second phase of the research project *Information on the Internet and Digital Inclusion: study of the organizations that work from the perspective of digital inclusion, in the city of Salvador, State of Bahia (Infoinclusão)*. The first results were presented in Brandão and Silva (2004) and Borges and Silva (2004). It was developed by the Grupo de Estudos em Políticas de Informação e Inclusão Digital (Gepindi) - Information Policies and Digital Inclusion Study Group, linked to the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciência da Informação da Universidade Federal da Bahia (Posici/UFBA)¹ - Postgraduate Program of the Information Science Institute at the Federal University of Bahia. It began in 2003, when it received financial assistance from the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) -

¹ <http://www.posici.ufba.br>

National Research Council, in accordance with Universal Announcement 01/2002 and concluded in September 2005.

The posing of the problem by the *Infoinclusão* was based on considerations and discussions of Gepindi regarding the importance of access to information on the Internet, since the latter is becoming preponderant as an information environment and offers democratization of the access to information, since theoretically anyone can have access to this media. However, according to widely publicized statistics, this access is still restricted to a minority in Brazil.

In 2005 the Internet Management Committee in Brazil presented data that was still not very encouraging: 16.6% possessed a computer at home; 55% had never utilized a computer; 30% had utilized a computer in the last 3 months; 13.8% used a computer daily. With respect to use of the Internet, 68% had never utilized it; 24% had utilized it in the last 3 months and only 9.6% used it daily. Therefore, the great majority of the Brazilian population is in a state of digital exclusion. Compared to the recognized reality of social exclusion in Brazil, which is especially visible in Salvador, digital exclusion is found to be to the same extent, or even aggravates the social exclusion. This reality leads to working on behalf of digital inclusion.

The Green Book of the Information Society Program in Brazil (Takahashi, 2000) advocates the Generalizing of Citizenship Services, which signifies conceiving solutions and promoting actions that involve from expansion and improvement of the access infrastructure to training citizens who, **informed and aware**, can utilize the services available on the network. This proposal includes as inherent in the concept of digital inclusion, not only the acquisition of basic skills for the use of computers and of the Internet, but also the training for utilization of these media on behalf of individual and community interests and needs, with responsibility and a sense of citizenship.

This concept is known as the Digital Literacy Program, emphatically ratified in the conceptions of Brazilian electronic government (Grupo de Trabalho Novas Formas Eletrônicas de Interação, 2000; Brasil, 2002), whose implementation is strategic for the country. It makes this operational mainly by means of its Portal of information and ser-

vices on the Internet. Accordingly, in order for electronic government to exist, there needs to be “electronic citizens”, that is to say, those who seek out this Portal to satisfy their needs as citizens in a normal everyday way. However, seeking information on the Internet or in the Portal can be a complicated process for those not possessing information literacy. In this way, there is a need for intermediary action in order to provide these people with this knowledge, or what is called information literacy education, a concept discussed in Borges and Silva (2004), Silva, Jambeiro, Lima, and Brandão (2005) and in a more profound way in Borges (2005). Therefore, digital literacy necessarily implies that there is education for information.

The training of citizens to provide this literacy justifies the government’s concern regarding working with a digital inclusion concept, whose basic point is access to information on the networks and creating and encouraging programs for this purpose. In the article *Digital inclusion requires a new social pact between governments and society*, Santos (2005)² has declared that digital inclusion should be treated as a constituent element of the electronic government policy, so that the latter can take the form of a universal policy. This concern with exclusion and the implementation of actions, in the sense of attenuating the situation, has also been receiving attention from the private sector and mainly from organizations linked to the Third Sector Organizations that works from the perspective of social inclusion. Many of these organizations have been concerned more directly with carrying out digital inclusion actions in needy communities. These actions are well known, but surveys and studies are needed in order to know who they are and how they are working with the question of the access to information in their attempts at digital inclusion.

Based on these considerations, two objectives became necessary and were satisfactorily achieved: 1) constructing a frame of comprehension for the link between the concepts of access to information

² Rogério Santanna dos Santos – Secretary of Logistics and Information Technology in the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management and executive secretary of the Electronic Government Executive Committee of the Brazilian Federal Government. Internet Management Committee in Brazil.

on the Internet and digital inclusion; 2) verify this link, in an empirical way, with OTSs and their “included persons” in the city of Salvador, State of Bahia. The work was carried out in two phases. The first was developed in three stages: 1) establishment of a conceptual framework for digital inclusion, whose results were presented in Borges and Silva (2004) and Silva, Jambeiro, Lima, and Brandão (2005); 2) charting of the organizations that provide access to information and communication technologies in 5 districts representative of the city’s socio-economic reality, presented in Brandão and Silva (2004); 3) selection of the third sector organizations that said they were working with digital inclusion and interviews with those responsible for the organizations selected in order to get to know their digital inclusion practices, presented in Borges and Silva (2004).

From the results of stage 3, and in view of the importance of the electronic government’s consolidation, a topic also of great interest to the Gepindi, it was necessary to verify two questions: since electronic government is a strategic issue for the Brazilian State and the government itself recognized and emphatically supports digital inclusion, are the organizations that are practicing digital inclusion familiar with electronic government? Do they make use of the information of interest to the public, available in the government’s Portal, in their digital inclusion processes? Seeking to answer these questions, a second phase was developed in 2 stages: 1) conceptualization of the digital inclusion – electronic government relation and the Brazilian situation; 2) empirical research which was developed in 3 steps: 1- analysis of the pages of the Services and Information Portal of the Government Network, in order to verify their potential as a source of practical and contextual information; 2- from the data obtained from the 7 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in stage 3 of the first phase, a relation was established between the concept practiced by them and that of electronic government; 3- Evaluation with the people that went through the inclusion programs of the organizations researched, of the improvements in their lives and the relation with electronic government.

Conceptualization and the Brazilian situation

In the discussion of the concept in the first phase of the research and reported in Borges and Silva (2004) in a synthetic manner, it was seen that effective digital inclusion requires the confluence of another 3 “i’s”: technological **infrastructure**, relevant **information** and **intermediation**, that provides individuals with training for accessing, understanding, assimilating and using information in their own and their community’s benefit. The access to and use of information, according to the thinking of Barreto (2002), should serve as a modifying instrument of man’s awareness. Information, when appropriately adopted, produces knowledge and modifies the individual’s mental stock of knowledge, provides benefits for his development and for the welfare of the society in which he lives.

In a more profound philosophical view of the topic, in Silva, Jambeiro, Lima, and Brandão (2005), it was asserted that the digital inclusion – information literacy relation was a question of ethics and citizenship. XXI century citizens need to be capable of access to information on the Internet. Citizenship in this new digital era lies incontestably in this relation and there seems to be an international understanding that electronic government is the path to making the citizens’ transactions with their governments more dynamic and to promoting the democratization of the XXI century, the generator of electronic democracy.

Electronic government and electronic democracy

The link between electronic government and democracy becomes clearer on observing the objectives that normally appear associated with electronic government programs:

- Improvement in the performance of public services, wider coverage of services and economy of resources – are objectives to be achieved as a repercussion of the improved quality of the

internal processes and performance of online services such as: issuance of certificates, scheduling health and education services, payment of taxes and income tax declarations;

- Transparency of the State's actions and greater social control – mainly by means of the rendering of accounts and of the disclosure of all activities: from budgets of the different government entities, through publicity for bidding procedures, to wide dissemination of government services and programs, developing in this way the culture of accountability.
- Greater popular participation – such as the possibility of interacting and participating in governmental decisions by means of instruments such as electronic voting and forums for discussion of topics of interest to the public.

Authors such as Ferguson (2002), Sanchez (2003), Jardim (2004), Finkelievich (2003) associate the analysis of electronic government's progress with three components, dimensions or perspectives directly related to the objectives mentioned above: 1) electronic performance of services (e-administration) – that seeks greater effectiveness, efficiency and quality in the services performed by the government and public institutions, by electronic means; 2) electronic democracy (e-democracy) that consists of the seeking of transparency for the public administration and participation by the citizens in governmental decisions by electronic means, such as access to legislative processes, electronic communication with elected representatives, electronic voting, etc.; 3) electronic governance (e-governance) – incorporates Information and Communication Technologies (TICs) in order to give support to government managers on different levels of decision-making, in the development and implementation of public policies, among others, aiming at making government action more dynamic.

The forms of relationship of the electronic government received a nomenclature based on the one that originated in the business area: G2G (government to government) – refers to the integration between the various agencies on one level of the federation (horizontal integration) and between the municipal, state and federal levels (vertical integra-

tion); G2B (government to business) – is the relationship with suppliers and private investors; G2C (government to citizens) – is the new interface for interaction between government and the citizenry. It is precisely the relation with the citizens that supports electronic government. If the population is not familiar with it, does not utilize it or does not see any value in its services, the program loses its reason for existence. It is a question of a two-way street: electronic government has to satisfy the citizens' needs in terms of information and services, but it depends on the latter's access and participation in order to justify and maintain its existence; the citizen, in turn, at various times in his life, needs the Government's services and information but in general still relates them with counters requiring his physical presence in order to be serviced, and is ignorant of the possibilities offered by electronic media.

Electronic government, therefore, presupposes a redefinition of the government-citizen relation, with the presentation of services and information in accordance with the user's interest and not as a form of organization of the government entity. The individual who wishes to open a company, for example, is not interested in the various government entities that deal with this type of action; he is interested in finding all that is necessary for this purpose in one single place, in the most expeditious and efficient way possible. As the Gartner Group (apud Ferguson, 2002) puts it, electronic government refers to the continuous optimizing of the government's performance of services, of the citizens' participation and of the public administration through transformation of the internal and external relations by means of the TICs. The general understanding points to making information and public services available online, through portals that facilitate their access, as the initial step in the direction of full attainment of the electronic government concept. Accordingly, *Infoinclusão* has concentrated on the information and public services provided by means of governmental portals.

Governmental Portals

The definition of portal adopted is that of Cunha (apud Akutsu & Pinho, 2002):

A portal is an entrance door into the worldwide network. It is starting from the portal that many users define their next steps on the Web. The portals are frequently visited places, and therefore being recognized as a portal is directly related to the power with which the site attracts visitors. The most frequent services of a portal include e-mail services, chats, news search services, free or not. (p. 5).

The governmental portals are the new channels for providing services, information and communication between citizens and their government. The major benefit for the citizens lies in the possibility of access at all times, without the need for moving around, with gains in quality, speed of access and time taken in execution. For the government, the gains lie in the expanded capability for offering services, elimination of redundancies and duplicated efforts, reduced costs and increase in the transparency of its actions. According to Bittencourt Filho (2000, p. 60), the public sector spends most of its budget collecting, processing and disseminating information – tax records, statistics, research or even meteorological data. In this way, when the government disseminates information, in many case it is already providing the service desired by the citizens.

In an ideal portal, the services would be organized in accordance with the user's needs and would be provided by different government entities authorized by a single request by the user. This is in accordance with what Silveira (2001) calls cooperative portals, in which the user would access, starting from a specific site, a set of information and services of varied origin, without the utilization of links between the original sites of the various government organizations. Some authors, like Silveira (2001) and Bittencourt Filho (2000) have discussed impor-

tant elements to be considered in the offering of information and public services on the Internet, such as:

- Focus on the citizens' interest and needs, taking into consideration the diversity of users;
- Availability of means of contact in the conventional way (telephone, fax, address) and based on electronic means (e-mails, chats);
- Impeccable language, in a direct simple manner, with short sentences;
- Accessible format, with friendly interface, attractive design and easy navigation;
- Organization of the information in a simple, coherent way, and with search systems;
- Functional sites, avoiding heavy layouts;
- Constant updating, both of the site's information as well as of its links;
- Availability of interaction and feedback mechanisms.

This outline of electronic government and governmental portals formed the basis for the explanation of the Brazilian electronic government and for the analysis of the information in its Portal.

Electronic government in Brazil

In Brazil, despite the fact that most of the population is not connected to the net, since 2000 the federal government has been making an effort in the direction of implementing the Electronic Government Program³. There are important initiatives in the states and in some municipalities, but they are still relatively scarce and they mirror the federal government's experience. Accordingly, this research work has

³ All the documents referring to the implementation are available at: <https://www.governoeletronico.gov.br/o-gov.br/>

concentrated on observation of the Electronic Government in the federal sphere. Ruediger (2003), in a similar study, also concluded that the federal government in the general picture is far ahead of the other spheres. In any event, in various circumstances the federal government portal sends the citizens to the sites of their respective state governments.

The systemization of the ideas concerning an Electronic Government Program took place after the formation of the Comitê Executivo do Governo Eletrônico (CEGE) – Brazilian Electronic Government Executive Committee, established by decree on October 18, 2000. Its origin is very closely linked to the Information Society Program, so much so that its initial efforts were focused on three of that Program's seven lines of action: making the services available to everyone; government within reach of everyone and advanced infrastructure. In September 2000, the CEGE presented an Electronic Government Policy Proposal to the Federal Government Executive Branch. The policy provided for growth of information on the net, with potential for greater transparency and the consequent reduction of government bureaucracy, increasing social control over the State and contributing to the democratization of the decision-making process and to the effectiveness of government actions. In this context, the Brazilian Electronic Government should take the position of a democratic, strategic, socially just and efficient agent in the performance of services for its citizens (Grupo de Trabalho Novas Formas Eletrônicas de Interação, 2000). Among the Proposal's long-term objectives are three of special interest from the viewpoint of the *Infoinclusão*, according to Almeida (2003):

- offering on the Internet all the services performed for the citizens, with improvement of the performance standards, cost reduction and access facility;
- expanding the citizens' access to information, in appropriate formats, by means of the Internet;
- encouraging access to the Internet, especially by means of access points placed in public or community institutions. (p.1)

The explicit announcement of these objectives shows that the Government recognizes the access to information and services via the Internet as a means of improving the quality of life and the exercising of citizenship. This is reinforced in the document showing the result of 2 years of electronic government (Brasil, 2002):

The new information technologies and the concepts and approaches inaugurated with the implementation of Electronic Government represent an extraordinary possibility for advance in the sense of returning to society the great quantity of information of which the State is perhaps the main holder, in the form of expanded access to knowledge, better services, more transparency in public management and better quality of the process of formulation and control of public policies. (p. 38)

In this connection, among the main lines of action was making the services available to everyone, having as a guideline the encouraging of access to the Internet, whether individual, public or even collective and community-based. The goal would be to place the government within everyone's reach, increasing the transparency of its actions and expanding the citizens' participation. For this, "with relation to the citizens, portals on the Internet are developed that function as true virtual counters for information and assistance involving the performance of services" (Brasil, 2002, p. 6). In 2003, during Lula's Administration, 8 Electronic Government Technical Committees were created and 7 general guidelines for Electronic Government were established. In the following year the *Consolidated Report of the Technical Committees* was published, portraying the planning for the conducting of electronic government actions in Brazil until 2006. It contains nine chapters devoted to explaining the interpretation and orientation for the 7 guidelines established. Some points in it deserve highlighting from this work's point of view:

The Federal Government's sites and online services should be structured in accordance with the matters of interest to and profile of the target public (p. 9)

The online services should be offered based on the citizens' 'life events' (p. 10)

The available search resources should incorporate integrated search facilities in the entire set of the Federal Government's sites and online services (p. 22)

These points are in accord with that which has been mentioned in the literature as essential elements to be taken into consideration in the offering of information and services on the Internet, as mentioned above. Nevertheless, the Electronic Government's relationship structure involves other channels of interactions in addition to the Brazilian Government Network's Information and Services Portal⁴. According to the government itself:

The Government Network Portal should incorporate all the services and information offered the citizens with security and quality. In this process, the government should appear to the citizens as a single entity, with friendly interfaces, with free access to the databases regarded as public property, with the exceptions provided for by law (Grupo de Trabalho Novas Formas Eletrônicas de Interação, 2000).

As the main channel of communication with the citizens and the product that achieved greater visibility among the electronic government projects, there is justification for an analysis of it as a provider of information and promoter of digital inclusion initiatives, whose concept provides for access to information for citizenship, as demonstrated by the programs that have been implemented for promotion of digital inclusion and can be consulted in the electronic government's sites, such

⁴ www.e.gov.br

as the National Digital Inclusion Observatory⁵; Governo Eletrônico – Serviço de Atendimento ao Cidadão (GESAC) - Electronic Government – Citizens Assistance Service; Brazil House and Computer for Everyone.

The government of the State of Bahia has also been seeking to promote digital inclusion by means of the Bahia Digital Inclusion Program, whose main initiative is the Digital Identity Program⁶, launched in 2004, as a group of actions focused on digital inclusion. The Program recognizes digital inclusion as a basic question of citizenship and views it as a much broader concept than simple access by the population to computers and to the Internet, but rather as a means of promoting improvement of the quality of life, generating knowledge and exchange of information, expanding employability and making possible the construction of an active, enterprising citizenship (Bahia, 2004).

Empirical Research

Analysis of the Information offered by the Government Services and Information Portal

The analysis of the Government Services and Information Portal focused on the type and the organization of the available information. With regard to content, according to communication of Pessi (2004)⁷, the Government Services and Information Portal possessed, at that time, 1,300 services and 9 thousand types of information. Faced with this large quantity, it was necessary to establish a sample. Therefore an option was made for the information that was related to the icons on the upper horizontal bar and the central column of the page, at the time of

⁵ <http://www.inclusaodigital.gov.br/onid>

⁶ Bahia Social and Digital Inclusion Program. <http://www.cidadaniadigital.ba.gov.br/pid.php?pgid=2>

⁷ Diretora do Departamento de Governo Eletrônico (Director of the Electronic Government Department). Oral news at the V National Information Science Encounter, Salvador, June 2004.

the research, which occurred on March 25, 26 and 27, 2005, from 10 a.m to 11:30 p.m. The sample involved 18 types, whose links led to a total of 106 information items broken down in Chart 1.

Federal Government Portal	
Type of Information/Service – Quantity	
Horizontal Bar	
1. Licenses, Concessions and Authorizations	1
2. Retiree, Pensioner	3
3. Assistance	8
4. Service Centers	11
5. Clearance Certificates	23
6. Denunciations	5
7. Documents	12
8. Legislation and Norms	2
9. Electricity, Water, Telephone and Gas	4
10. Payments to the Government	7
11. Cases in the Courts	8
12. Health	11
13. Public Servant	6
Central Part	
14. Official Gazette and Court Gazette	1
15. Weather Forecast	1
16. Search for Procons (Consumer Protection Agencies)	1
17. Individual Income Tax Declaration 2005	1
18. Pregnant Women's Agenda	1
Total	106

Chart 1 - Types of information available in the Portal

“Type of Information” was interpreted as the first description furnished by the Portal itself, which then sent the citizen to the page where the complete information or the service was actually found. The classification was done in accordance with the interpretation of Barreto (1994): **Practical information** – that which satisfies needs related to the basic requirements of life nowadays: food, health, security, housing, clothing and education; **Contextual information** – that which guarantees access to or permanence in the various contexts in which the individual wishes to participate; **Selective information** – that which leads to reflection, creativity, self-achievement.

The description and classification of the information items constitute a complex process, since the pages do not follow a standard organization of information. While some of them make available a diversified range of information items that can fit into the 3 classifications, other pages do not make any information available, as for example, those that present a form in which the user fills in his data and only then receives the required information.

For the pages that presented diversified types of information, the option was made to attribute the classification that covered most of the information. For those cases in which the information would only be available after the furnishing of the user’s data – as is the case of the “declaration of income for income tax purposes” of the Social Security Institute, in which it is necessary to furnish the number of the benefit and date of birth – the option was made to infer the type of information that would be made available.

However, in some cases it was not possible to determine the type of information that would or could be obtained, as in the case of “Talk to the Development and Regional Action Company – CAR”, in which a form is opened for the agency’s “Talk to Us” program, but there is no information or link to the main page. In these cases the classification “It is not possible to determine – Without information” was used.

There are also cases of pages with mistakes, not encountered or off the air, in which the classification “It is not possible to determine – Page with problems” was attributed. The classification “Others” was created for cases in which the information made available could not be

placed in any of the established classifications, as in the example, “Gas assistance – download of the program”, in which despite the fact that the assistance is reserved for people in a poverty situation, the information is clearly for technicians, such as features of the available applications and versions.

The results of the analysis of the pages

Of the 106 types of information collected, the classification indicated 17 of them as practical (16%) and 60 as contextual (56%), that is to say, 72% of the total analyzed. This data confirms the Portal as a great provider of practical and contextual information. It is an important observation, since the offer of information in general is inversely proportional to the demand for information that satisfies the individual’s basic needs, according to Barreto (1994). On the other hand, the non-access to 28% of the Portal’s information items due to a mistake on the page, nonexistence of information or information diverging from the objective is a very negative point for the Portal and especially for the Electronic Government Program itself, since the Portal is the element that aims to achieve the Electronic Government’s first long-term objective: offering on the Internet all the services performed for the citizens. The non-appearance of the “selective information” class does not signify its nonexistence. There are scientific texts and texts directed at doctors, for example, but in the pages studied they appear as exceptions, when compared with those of a practical and contextual nature.

With regard to the origin of the available information, in the very first contact with the Portal, the system requests the selection of the State of the Federation. Then it asks: “A cookie will be recorded in order to avoid appearance of the State option box whenever you access the service. Do you agree?” This causes the user to be automatically led to his State, when the latter is the source of the information requested. For this study the State of Bahia was selected. Accordingly, of the 106 items of information obtained in the Portal, 53 (50%) were furnished by entities of the Federal Government, 19 (17.92%) by entities of the

Bahia State Government. In 34 cases (32.08%) the source could not be determined.

Classifying the items of information by type, but now based on the sphere (federal or state) responsible for their being available, an equilibrium was ascertained in the offer of practical and contextual information on the part of the state government, possibly reflecting the latter's closer proximity to the citizens in the offer of basic services (water, sanitation, health), while the federal government concerns itself more with contextual matters.

Regarding access, according to Pessi (2004), in the year 2003 the Portal received 374,960 accesses, which in relation to the total Brazilian population in that year represented around 2%. Braga (apud Chahin, Cunha, Knight & Pinto, 2004) based on the Global Information Technology Report also concludes that Brazil frequently appears among the leaders in the offering of online governmental services, even though in the case of other indicators, such as public access to the Internet, it still leaves much to be desired.

Thus it appears that the Electronic Government has made available information and services, which does not mean, however, access to this by the population. One probable cause is the simple ignorance of the potential users, since up to now no mass communication media has been utilized to publicize the information and services made available on the Internet, although "a publicity campaign to disseminate the government's initiatives in the information technology and communication fields and to encourage the use of the Government Network portal" was provided for in the planned goals (Grupo de Trabalho Novas Formas Eletrônicas de Interação, 2000). Two years later, however, an evaluation by the government itself noted: "the dissemination structure is still insufficient for obtaining a greater impact on society and on the majority of public servants" (Brasil, 2002, p. 17).

Another relevant aspect in making available information in portals refers to their organization with effectiveness for the access to the information. The Government's Services and Information Portal takes on the appearance of a true labyrinth for finding the desired information. For example, if someone wants to know the address of the closest public

medical assistance service – a basic necessity for any citizen – in the Health icon there is the option “Guide to SUS (Unified Health System) Outpatient Clinics” which leads to the Health Ministry page. However, in that Ministry’s page, there are several options of links and services, but it was not possible to locate a guide to outpatient clinics. This is a confirmation of the declaration of Jardim (2004), for whom the stocks of information produced by the government have not received appropriate management, compromising the quality of the political-decision-making process and the citizens’ right to information: “previous to digital exclusion, the Brazilian State has accumulated a negative balance of informational exclusion”.

If the Portal intends to be a place for access to information for the marginalized sectors, as mentioned by President Lula (Chagas & Mota, 2004), then, that information should be presented in a simple direct manner. Taking as an example the case of registration for the Food Scholarship Program, it is disappointing to see that where information for the ordinary citizen should be, there is technical data such as: “Version 4.8.1 replaces all the previous versions and their respective updates; Perfecting of the routines for importing files and extracting domiciles”. This situation is repeated in other types of assistance that should provide services and practical information for all the citizens such as the Child Labor Eradication Program.

The fact that there are services in the portal available only on certain days and at certain times, such as the case of the “Certificate of Debts Owed the Federal Government” and “List of Federal Government Debtors”, is also surprising. This runs contrary to the philosophy of services on the Internet, whose idea is to use this media precisely due to its being available all the time. An element that denounces the Portal’s outdated situation lies within the option Payment to the Government, where only the “Download of the 2003 individual income tax program” is found during the period for the 2005 income tax declaration. The lack of updating must be the probable cause for there being, in a total of 106 types of information, 19 (17.92%) with mistakes in access: page not encountered, service not available, action canceled, non-existent, among others.

A positive point made clear in the evaluation of the Portal, however, refers to its positioning as a State provider of service and information. It does not present itself as a propaganda vehicle or governmental newscast. This certainly counts for points in the credibility of this instrument for performance of services by the State. This confirmation is even more obvious in the Federal Government pages, where the information is visibly directed to the citizens. On the other hand, in the pages of the Government of the State of Bahia there is a large volume of information about the entity itself, its structure and its projects. Take for example the case of the Superintendência de Construções Administrativas da Bahia (SUCAB) - Administrative Constructions Superintendency of Bahia: the information options are: introduction, organization chart, performance and legislation. The page in this case functions more as an electronic folder of the organization, but not very close to the individuals' need for information.

Third Sector Organizations and the Electronic Government – Digital Inclusion Relation

As already mentioned in stage 3 of phase 1 and reported in depth in Borges and Silva (2004), 7 organizations, those that said they were performing “digital inclusion”, were studied. All of them are Third Sector Organizations: Ilê Aiyê Carnival Group Cultural Association, Odara Cultural Project, and Fraternal Assistance Organization (OAF), in the Liberdade District; High School of Arts and Professions of Bahia, Olodum Creative School, Little Gandhi Cultural Center, Steve Biko Cultural Institute, in the region of the Pelourinho Historical Center. The underlined expressions represent the form by which these organizations are usually known. Nevertheless, in order to preserve their privacy, they will be referred here using numbers.

It is important to remember at this time that without having a formalized digital inclusion policy, the actions for this purpose, originating with the Federal Government, have been linked to the Electronic Government Program. Taking into consideration this link, and the Gov-

ernment Services and Information Portal being a potential supplier of information that could be used in the digital inclusion programs, the Third Sector Organizations were questioned regarding knowledge of the Program, the Portal, the information to which the latter gives access and its utilization in the digital inclusion practices promoted.

Of the 7 organizations consulted, not one had any clear knowledge of Electronic Government. Of these, 4 had never even heard of it. In ORG 3 the interviewee thought “*Electronic Government is the government in which the machine receives all the information and has someone on the other side to reply*”. ORG 6 is the one that presented the closest understanding on asserting that it is making available government services by electronic means. The interviewee of ORG 7 said he had already heard about it, believed that it was a way for the government to make information available, but he did not go into more details.

The Government Services and Information Portal seems to be better known than the Program that generated it. When the interviewer mentioned the “government portal” or when she listed some information available in the Portal, 4 of the interviewees were able to establish some relation, although very general, as in ORG 4, where the interviewee said he knew it had to do with a public service, with a page on the Internet. However, of these 4, on being asked about the information made available in the Portal:

- 2 listed information such as certificates and records, government budget and information of administrative interest to the organization (ORGs 2 and 3):

Today, for any information, we have to enter in point gov. in order to consult the documentation that is necessary for here (ORG 2)

I use it a lot. I use it a lot with relation to what involves the benefits that I can receive from the government and information about the government's participative budget.

Because it is our role to claim funds of interest to the population (ORG 3)

- 1 showed little assurance and mentioned information originating with the Government of the State of Bahia, such as the Serviço de Atendimento ao Cidadão (SAC) - Citizen Assistance Service and the Bahiatursa (Bahia Tourism Authority) (ORG 1).
- 1 said that he had already visited the Portal, but was unable to remember the type or what information could be encountered. He reported that he entered the site around two years ago, recalled that it had a predominantly green color, but at the time did not consider the information useful for the work he was developing and did not return to visit it (ORG 4).

ORG 6 said he knew of the existence of the Portal, mentioned some services that he knew were being made available on the Internet, but he still had not visited the Portal itself. The survey of the use of the Federal Government Portal's information in the practice of digital inclusion did not encounter any positive reply. Among those who utilize the Portal in some way, they do it only for administrative purposes:

In the course we do not [utilize information from the Portal]. We of the team, anything that we want from point gov, all the documents we need, for example, from the SEFAZ (Finance Secretariat of the Government of the State of Bahia), from the Federal Government, from Bahiatursa, we utilize by means of the Portal, of the Internet. In the course, nothing. (ORG 2)

The Government Portal is not used in the digital inclusion process, just for administrative use, in the registration in projects for use of government funds in the institution's cultural incentive programs. (ORG 3)

The reasons mentioned for disregarding the Portal and its information in the digital inclusion process were: - Total unawareness (ORGs 1 and 5); - Had not thought of the possibility, but intended to verify it in the future (ORG 6); - Considered that the information made available by public entities could restrict thought and therefore was not interesting for the inclusion process. *“A critical analysis of the benefits and harm caused by what is encountered on the Network is needed. Not all of it is true”*. (ORG 4); - The access to the Internet is directed to sites that satisfy the group’s interest that, in the interviewee’s opinion, are those that deal with black causes (ORG 3); - Access to the Internet plays a secondary role in the inclusion process and the students do not use it for seeking information: *“In the course we provide only an elementary basis of the Internet”* (ORG 7).

An evaluation of the whole set of results obtained makes it appear that in general those actors who are active in practices that aim at digital inclusion do not relate this practice to the access to practical and contextual information made available by the Electronic Government. In most cases, this occurs due to total ignorance both of the concept of Electronic Government, as well as of the Government Portal. The direct consequence is that the inclusive possibilities of the access to practical information and especially to that of the electronic government have been disregarded, not reaching the end-user to whom they are directed.

Meanwhile, according to the speeches by representatives of the Government, there is a constant wager on the partnership with organizations from civilian society in order to close the gap between making public information available and the actual access to it by the population. In the document that offers a balance sheet of the 2 years of Electronic Government (Brasil, 2002), it also appears that the “articulation of partnerships with society in actions concerned with digital inclusion have been sought in an active way, in consonance with guidelines and recommendations discussed in public forums”. Nevertheless, as has been shown above, the civilian society organizations have not been providing access to the electronic government’s information nor are they familiar with it. Thus it is seen that the growing availability of the

Electronic Government's information and services is not reflected in the population's access to them.

“Digital Inclusion” in the Life of those “Included” and the Relation with Electronic Government

The results presented here, obtained through the work for the Borges dissertation (2005), refer to the third and last stage of the *In-foinclusão*: evaluation with the people that participated in the inclusion programs of organizations researched. The expressions “digital inclusion” and “included persons” are being utilized in quotes, to refer to the programs offered by the organizations and to the persons who participated in them, respectively.

In the Life of the “included persons”

The idea was to know precisely what has changed in the life of the persons who went through digital inclusion processes in the organizations researched. 70 people were heard, 10 from each organization, formally considered to be “included persons” according to the concept practiced by each entity, and all from the last group trained. This criterion, of seeking people from the last groups, was adopted due to the greater facility in locating these persons, still recently registered in the organization. On the average, the conclusion of the courses had occurred 6 months before the beginning of this survey. The number 10 does not represent any percentage. It was defined in an arbitrary way, as the number that should be attained in all the organizations, taking into consideration the difficulty in locating the people and, when located, the need for convincing them to collaborate with the research within the time period scheduled for this stage: from March 30 to April 23, 2005.

Of the 70 interviewees, 30 of them (43%) were in the age bracket from 15 to 20; 17 (24%) from 20 to 30; 14 (20%) from 9 to 15. With respect to their skin color as declared by them, 38 (55%) were black; 30 (43%) brown; 1 white and 1 yellow. With regard to sex, 39 (56%) were women and 31 (44%) men. Educational level: 24 (34%) completed high school; 25 (36%) with high school incomplete; 16 (23%) with elementary school incomplete; 4 (6%) with university incomplete. With respect to personal income, 43 (62%) were without any income; 19 (27%) earned up to 1 monthly minimum wage; 5 (7%) earned up to twice the monthly minimum wage; 2 (3%) up to three times the monthly minimum wage; 1 (1%) above three times the monthly minimum wage. Most of the interviewees were young, 63% of them under 20. Only 1 said he was white. Most of them were females. 70% had around 10 years of normal study, but had difficulty in entering the labor market, remaining dependent upon family income in 75% of the cases. It is possible to infer that the predominance of that age bracket that had left or was leaving normal education programs was based on the perception by them that formal education was not preparing them, neither to enter the labor market nor to act in the social area, the latter being increasingly influenced by the TICs.

When asked about their main reason for participating in the digital inclusion program, 29 of them replied that they were seeking training in order to get a job and thus be able to contribute to the family income; 15 sought improvement and updating in working with computers; 11 sought initiation in computers; 6 wanted to learn in general; 6 sought personal/professional updating; 8 attended because the course was free; 4 attended by recommendation of friends and relatives; 2 came out of curiosity. The lack of personal income and the consequent impossibility to contribute to the family income are reflected in the concern of most of the individuals with entering or remaining in the labor market. As an open question, the number of replies exceeded the number of interviewees, who explained freely the reasons that led them to enter the digital inclusion program. The desire to improve or update their knowledge of computers – 15 replies – or to enter this area – 11 replies – highlights some individuals' interpretation of digital inclusion as

related to computer courses. Since 29 demonstrated concern with entering the labor market, an attempt was made then to verify the changes that occurred in this specific context. Of the 70 interviewees, 10 were employed when they entered the program, while 60 were unemployed.

In this way, the numbers and the statements of the interviewees demonstrated that there were no significant changes in their lives with respect to the labor market. Of the 10 already employed, one half were able to apply the new knowledge to their work, but only 1 received a promotion or raise in salary because of this. Most of them continued to do the same type of work – 7 cases – and did not perceive any changes in working conditions – 8 cases – based on the new competencies acquired. Of the 60 unemployed participants, only 5 succeeded in getting jobs based on the new knowledge. Taking into consideration the Brazilian context, in which there is a high incidence of workers performing services without being formally employed, this possibility was also verified, but here also, only 9 of the 60 unemployed participants utilized the knowledge acquired to perform some service.

It appears that the non-development of competencies linked to the use of information – information literacy – is creating a lack at the time of access to employment and improvement in working conditions, which supports the observation of Ronca and Costa (2002) when they assert that for the individual, in the context of the society in which more than 60% of the professionals spend more than a third of their time manipulating information and this is moving rapidly to the networks, mastery of this media is indispensable for entering or remaining in the labor market. There is also Sorj (2003) for whom “the capability of handling information, of analyzing it and developing it is a central component of professional competence in most economic activities in the contemporary world” (p. 45).

Since no significant changes were observed in access to jobs, the interviewees were asked whether the skills acquired in the digital inclusion program had generated improvements in other aspects of their lives. Of the 70 interviewees, 12 replied that they had not perceived any changes for the better, but 58 observed improvements, and their main replies were: 11, facility in type works/résumés; 17, updated their

knowledge; 9, facilities in doing research/informing themselves; 8 facility in handling computers.

It is important to emphasize that this question received very diversified replies and the four items mentioned above thus do not represent the total but rather the most representative items. Among the changes perceived – facility in type works for school and *résumés* – does not appear to fit in “changes in life”, but is just a new skill. The other changes mentioned – acquisition/updating of knowledge and facility in doing research and becoming informed – are undoubtedly important skills in the context of the Information Society that can lead to real changes, but they also cannot be classified as concrete changes. None of them mentioned accessing a source for utilizing the information and attain significant knowledge in his life as a citizen.

“Included persons” and electronic government

Seeking then to learn about knowledge of the electronic government, questions were asked initially about which sources were accessed for public services. The results were: of the 70 interviewees, 10 (12% of the total multiple responses) mentioned the telephone directory; 15 (18%) cited the public entity that offers the service (for example, Coelba, the electricity company, or Telemar, the telephone company); 7 (9%) said relatives; 10 (12%) mentioned the Internet; 40 (49%) sought the Citizen Assistance Service of the State of Bahia (SAC). In the largest number of cases – 49% - the individual preferred going over to the SAC. The use of the Internet, along with the telephone directory – 12% for each one – appears only in third place. It is curious that people who have just concluded digital inclusion programs are not taking the Internet into consideration for having access to information about public services, which has become increasingly more available in this media.

Of the 70 persons consulted, 54 never access public services on the Internet, another 12 do it rarely, 2 do it monthly and 2 weekly. Of these 16 who access these services at some time, on being questioned regarding the site of access, 8 replies mentioning Telemar and 3 men-

tioning Coelba, the most cited services, were obtained. Only one person mentioned the Federal Government Portal spontaneously. When questioned, directly, whether they were familiar with the Federal Government Portal, only 6 of the 70 answered affirmatively. Coincidentally, the same number confirmed their knowledge of the Bahia State Government Portal, although none of them was familiar with both Portals. Therefore, the 12 that said they were familiar with one of the Portals were asked what types of information were made available in the portals.

The replies were very varied, and no one type of information was mentioned more than twice: information about the Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (ENEM) - National Secondary Education Examination, information about civil service examinations, information about the declaration of exemption from income tax and information about events, culture and tourism. Although they know about the existence of the Portals, not all of them usually utilize the information. Of the 12, only 7 said they access this information with any frequency: 1 weekly, 1 monthly and 5 rarely. It is clear that these people have not taken into consideration the government portals in the providing of information. Accordingly, the Portal can be transformed into one more instrument of social exclusion, if only those who have physical and cognitive access to the digital world utilize it.

Final Comments

As asserted in Silva, Jambeyro, Lima, and Brandão (2005), citizenship in the XXI century necessarily involves access to informational content available on the Internet and especially that of electronic government. The results of this research point out that this condition is not being satisfied in the case of people who have gone through processes called digital inclusion in Salvador, because not even those responsible for these programs have this awareness. The results also point out that this ignorance is due to the lack of dissemination and promotion of awareness on the part of the government itself, despite the affirmation

that digital inclusion is inseparable from electronic government in the *Principles and Guidelines for Electronic Government*, published in 2004:

Digital inclusion should be treated as a constituent element of the electronic government policy, so that the latter could take on the shape of a universal policy. This view is based on the interpretation of **digital inclusion as a right of citizenship** and therefore the subject of public policies for its promotion. However, the articulation of the electronic government policy **cannot lead to an instrumental view of digital inclusion**. The latter should be seen as a strategy for construction and affirmation of new rights and consolidation of others by facilitating access to them.⁸ (our boldface)

For the Information Society to come about, therefore, it is necessary for the citizens to be trained for the access to and use of information, increasing available on the Internet. The organizations that are active in digital inclusion practices could provide this training, based on access to practical and contextual information that leads to citizenship. As the electronic government itself declares, “digital inclusion should be seen as a strategy for construction and affirmation of new rights and consolidation of others by facilitating access to them”.

Accordingly, it is seen that digital inclusion and electronic government are concepts linked by access to information, insofar as they are interdependent and only become reality based on this access: electronic government needs digital inclusion to establish itself, and digital inclusion presupposes the training of active citizens, whose first step are the skills for access to and use of public information, increasingly provided by electronic governments. The relation to citizenship is reaffirmed in the *Technical Committees' Consolidated Report* (Brasil, 2004): “This electronic government project should be linked to the programs for combating hunger, to the eradication of poverty, violence, and to incentives for popular culture as a tool for recovering lost citizenship” (p. 3). It is therefore responsible for making the population as a whole

⁸ (<https://www.governoeletronico.gov.br/o-gov.br/principios>)

aware of the access to information and services that it makes available as its duty and as a right of the citizens.

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Information and services to the citizens: from bureaucracy desks to e-government portals¹

Introduction

World wide governments are in a race to implement e-governance, as they try to keep up with the rapid migration of private sector transactions to the digital environment. For this purpose government portals are created as channels of information and communication. One of the promises of e-government is the debureaucratization of transactions between the government and citizens and, through this, diminishing the time taken to access essential life services, such as health services, for instance. Another promise is the political involvement of citizens in the democratic debate as online interaction becomes more accessible.

¹ Previous versions of this paper were presented and or published elsewhere, in Portuguese.

Yet another is the transparency of government actions that should be explicitly exposed to the public eye.

One can forecast, in this way, how e-democracy refers to the existence of a more informed society, with a democracy that encourages citizen involvement and individuals that are more socially responsible, and are able to fully understand their rights and duties as citizens. For this to come true, two basic requisites should be observed: technological infrastructure (access for everybody to computers and network connections) and, essentially, “e-citizens”. Without people, particularly those economically or socially disadvantaged and digitally excluded, being able to access and use e-government information and services, this democracy will not be implemented.

Access to technology seems to be a problem that is easy to solve. Technology becomes more accessible as it becomes cheaper and through digital inclusion programmes, technology is taken to less privileged social strata. The biggest problem, with no easy solution, is to train “e-citizens”. In order to access information in networks or in government portals information literacy is necessary. It is well-known that a small minority, especially in societies that are developing, have the skills to do this. This is a factor that aggravates the state of social exclusion and that does not bring about, at least in the short or mid-term, e-democracy. We are, therefore, in a transition phase, when service desks are being replaced by government portals, regardless of whether people are capable of using them or not.

These considerations raise the following question: How does one “speed up e-democracy” within the new concept of citizenship, in which every citizen has the right to make use of life facilities, social inclusion, the fulfilment of duties, facilitated by access to e-government information and services?

Keeping the idea in mind that information literacy education and intermediation are fundamental for access to e-government information and services, as ways of speeding-up e-democracy, it was our aim, based on a literature review, to understand international literature and what has, most recently, been documented about these considerations,

and to devise a research equation for this purpose based on the preceding item.

Therefore, the aim of this text is to present these results that are a further product of the project – Digital Inclusion and Convergent Concepts: defining the state of the art within the contexts of Brazil and Portugal –, developed in 2006, by the Grupo de Estudos em Políticas de Informação e Inclusão Digital (Gepindi) – Information Policies and Digital Inclusion Group of Studies, the Instituto de Ciência da Informação da Universidade Federal da Bahia (ICI/UFBA) – Institute of Information Sciences at the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil, and the Communication and Information in New Technologically Mediated Contexts Group, at the Research Unit CETAC.MEDIA, Centre of Studies in Technologies and Science Communication at the University of Aveiro, Portugal. Thus, we aimed, also, to identify in this research, papers about Brazil and Portugal.

Within the scope of Gepindi, the project incorporates the Programme of Inclusion Studies, that has as its main theme – digital inclusion – this involves several approaches and considerations of various interrelated and endless concepts, as it is a very recent theme to do with the social, economical, political impacts of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

The following presentation introduces the foundations of this study's beginnings, it explains the way in which the contents were discovered in the bibliographic databases; the findings, and finally the analysis of these results with final comments.

Foundations of this study

This study is also a continuation of the results presented in Silva and Silva (2006), which, after considering the relevance of the connection between – digital inclusion and e-government – tried to answer the following questions: How has this connection been addressed in international literature? Who has been working on it? What information is available about Brazil and Portugal? Having stated that the research

would be restricted to bibliographic databases, the underlying goal was to understand, in an analytical way, the status of the connection between “digital inclusion X e-government”, “found” in digital libraries in terms of contents and authors/researchers, and more specifically the situation in Brazil and Portugal.

The bibliographic database searched was the Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) and therefore, the results are biased towards the Information Sciences area, but reveal the inter and multi-disciplinary aspect. They are, in particular, about developed countries and no studies specifically focused on the theme were found about either Brazil or Portugal. As the indexing language of LISA is English, the search expressions were translated into that language. The process of identifying the relevant literature revealed that the expression digital inclusion is not considered in the indexing terms of the database, or in the language of the authors we came across. The papers are almost always concerned with the problem, that is, the digital divide. The searches were then reoriented using this expression. Furthermore, the term electronic government is also sparsely used. The research indicated the need to use the expression *government information* associated with *access to information*. The association with the terms *<digital divide and government information and Access to information>* identified relevant papers on e-government and digital exclusion.

From the analysis of the papers retrieved, two important factors emerged: the new role of public libraries and librarians and the importance of the formulation of national information policies and e-government. A question that comes up in the papers about policies is the development of portals. These make e-government tangible, visible and they are the means through which the government communicates and interacts with citizens. In general, the analyses about them point out the many flaws in the organisation of the information and of the available content itself. There is not, as some authors point out, a concern with what individual users think, citizens, about their information needs and desires and, mainly, if they have the ability to recover the information and use it in their lives.

What emerged in the information retrieved from LISA, is that, usually societies with a greater level of organization, reflect this development in the information available on their portals. Canada is always referred to as one of the best examples. These societies are also the ones that, ironically, show more concern for the situation of digital exclusion, like, for example, the United States Clinton administration, largely known for its actions towards the digital inclusion of American society as a whole. These are the countries that also, launch concepts that look at social development and human rights, and these concepts end up appearing on the agenda of organisations with such goals and international acclaim, as UNESCO, that have embraced the information literacy cause as a programme of action. For this reason, these concepts are expressed in English and are often difficult to translate into Portuguese.

With this in mind, the work presented here, as a *continuum* of the results of the previous work, was based on the following premise:

Network activity is accepted as an irreversible reality. Electronic government (*electronic government; e-government; e-gov; electronic governance; e-governance*) is an essential part of digital life. It materializes “is made evident”, through the means of Portals (*Portals; websites*) with the goal of providing full time access, replacing, in this way, the bureaucratic desks of the public sector and their endless and static service queues. However, in order to make information and services available online, a reform is needed in the sectors and institutions of public administration, their processes, their interactions, along with their adaptability and efficiency facilitated by ICTs. As a consequence, we need citizens that look for, and use these portals routinely, so that they facilitate and ease life. These are e-citizens. For this, changes in habits and information literacy have to occur, yet this is notoriously restricted to minorities, the situation of the majority is of digital divide. So, digital inclusion is necessary for education to information literacy. However, not everyone, in the short to mid-term, will reach this competence level. For these people, the assistance of intermediaries is necessary to give them guidance on how to use the information available on government portals. Through the means of intermediaries, these citizens are included

and attain citizenship, understood within its new concept which is now embedded into digital society and electronic democracy (*e-democracy*).

Keywords were extracted from this argument for the retrieval of information found in bibliographic databases, these results are presented in the immediate section following the presentation of the contents discovery process.

The contents discovery process

The retrieval method has kept the Project definition: use, only, bibliographic databases in the CAPES Journal's Portal (Portal de Periódicos Capes – Brasil), and Online Knowledge Library (Biblioteca do Conhecimento Online - B-On – Portugal).

Using the keywords of the constructed argument the search expression was defined as: *<electronic government OR government OR e-gov OR electronic governance OR e-governance AND portals OR websites AND public administration AND electronic citizens OR citizens AND information literacy AND digital inclusion OR digital divide AND information literacy education AND intermediaries AND electronic democracy OR democracy>*.

The first delimitation was related to the areas of Social Sciences and Social Applied Sciences. Thus, the Wilson Web; CrossRef's and Scopus databases were browsed. Another definition was to browse each database according to its specificities and with all possible options taken from the constructed expression, using only the [keyword] resource. The final result was 14 papers, of which 5 were classified as theoretical: Coleman (1999), Kakabadse, Kakabadse and Kouzmin (2003), Bishop (2004), Bohman (2004), King (2006) and 9 classified as theoretical-empirical: Ho (2002), Moon (2002), McNeal, Tolbert, Mossberger, and Dotterweich (2003), Chadwick and May (2003), West (2004), Mahrer and Krimmer (2005), Carter and Bélanger (2005), Scott (2006), Torres, Pina and Acerete (2006).

Evaluation of contents

The results are categorised according to the factors that emerged from the evaluated contents and according to the proposed goal. The first factor to be analysed is therefore, the theoretical discussion about e-democracy. The second factor is the findings about e-governance and e-government. The third factor is about the means through which e-government operates: the Portals.

Electronic Democracy

The question of expanding democracy, in the *latu* sense of the term, is addressed in most of the retrieved papers, and even more so in the theoretical ones. Expressions such as rescue; recover; reinvention; transformation; reengineer; reinvigorate; innovation and other similar ones are widely used. There is a generalised expectation, that the real possibility of uninterrupted interactivity of the ICTs and the potential access that these offer to everyone, will take “e-civilization” to a greater level of political involvement.

Thus, the discussions, even if we are often referring to internal administrative processes or to external transactions, or to the offer of information and services from the government to its citizens, which refer to public administration, almost always end up, falling within the concepts of democracy, within the debate of the dichotomy between representative democracy X direct democracy and, with this, within political science. They thus surpass the findings about the use of access to information and services for an improved quality of life.

In this way, issues about the concept of e-democracy are often raised through discussion about democracy in the sense of citizen political involvement and their participation in public life, as we found in Coleman (1999), an author that is often cited in other identified papers. In the text, *Can the New Media Invigorate Democracy?*, from an analytical point-of-view of the British context, he emphasised the political-democratic aspect, more than the economic-administrative aspect of ICTs.

The main question asked, was how contemporary democracy could be significantly expanded through the means of ICTs, particularly through the Internet and digital television.

Coleman (1999) emphasised that ICTs do not inherently have the capacity to influence social forces, but with their qualitatively distinct characteristic the possibility of interaction exists. It is this possibility that can change the relationship within the communication process in an unprecedented way and in a radical manner, “disrupt” the process of governing/informing and being governed/informed/uninformed. Coleman’s vision is optimistic with respect to the potential democratic strength of the ICTs, but, according to him, the use of that potential depends on the political culture in which the application of these technologies is developed.

Also with an optimistic vision regarding the potential of ICTs in expanding democracy Kakabadse, Kakabadse and Kouzmin (2003), with the title *Reinventing the Democratic Governance Project through Information Technology? A Growing Agenda for Debate*, point out that post-industrial societies have reached an unprecedented point concerning this matter. The authors make an analysis about the positive as well as the negative implications of ICTs in e-democracy, beginning with the concept of democracy itself and discussing direct democracy; representative and liberal, that has led to the extreme individualism of today’s society.

Kakabadse, Kakabadse and Kouzmin (2003), argue that e-democracy can be understood as the capacity of the new communication environment to promote greater and better public involvement with the government. The Internet can, for instance, allow those who have access to technologies, to participate in elections, referendums and plebiscites virtually through the use of email and it can facilitate opinion gathering. It has the enormous potential to narrow the relationship between government and citizens, and between politicians and voters, allowing it, in this way to profoundly influence the nature of democratic governance, as some issues such as digital exclusion and the political apathy of citizens are overcome as also stated by Coleman (1999).

These issues, with respect to the civic potential of new technologies, have been studied by academics and researchers since the begin-

ning of the 1960s. Since then various nomenclatures have emerged: teledemocracy, technopolitics, new media, instant polling, satellite politics, video democracy, electronic democracy, cyberdemocracy, virtual polis and couch-potato democracy. Besides these various expressions, a variety of democracy models have been proposed, but Kakabadse, Kakabadse and Kouzmin (2003) state that four appear more frequently in literature and thus they specify the following:

- *electronic bureaucracy model* – forecasts the availability of on-line government information and services, from a single point, initially named, *one-stop-shops*. This model has been developing since 1996 under the Programme “Government Direct” initiated in a “*Green Paper*” published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It mainly predicts the efficiency and ease of public sector transactions by citizens and companies, and with this, a reduction in the size of the public sector;
- *information management model* – forecasts more effective communication between individual citizens and decision-makers, based on interaction through electronic messages. The authors point out that in the United States and Australia several public points are available for citizens to communicate with their representatives, such as kiosks, libraries, shopping centres, or even personal computers. According to them, that model was greatly explored by the Clinton administration which forwarded online information directly to people. The easy access to Congress projects, as well as to government publications results in a better more informed citizen. The rapid circulation of government policies, open to public discussion, creates a unique phenomenon only possible because of ICTs.
- *Populist model* – in this model the citizen may register their point-of-view on current discussions and thus it is already somewhat closer to direct democracy. The authors comment that it received visibility when Ross Perot popularised the term “*electronic town hall*”, in his presidential campaign of 1992,

when trying to rekindle the group spirit, in the citizens of New England and create national awareness by means of the ICTs. As well as with the creation of the Public Electronic Network (PEN) of Santa Monica, facilitating 24-hour town meetings for the state of New York, in October 1992. Then the era of direct communication began, dispensing intermediaries such as printed or spoken press or the television. Civic discourse became direct, interactive and inclusive. Some suggest that these town meetings may serve to “educate” people on political discussion. According to the authors, since then various projects in the United States have established town meetings as a regular part of political life. In January 1993, for instance, an electronic town hall was installed in Dallas, as part of the new CNN services available, to discuss the reduction of deficits, financing of campaigns, and lobbying rules providing instant telefeedback to citizens.

- *civil society* – refers to the complete transformation of political culture and is only possible in the context of the intense use of ICTs. It forecasts a narrow interaction between the government and its citizens through a robust and autonomous webpage on the Internet for information access and public debate.

The idea that ICTs expand democratic dialogue, is also argued in the text: *Expanding Dialogue: The Internet, the Public Sphere and Prospects for Transnational Democracy*, Bohman (2004). He explores further the discussion about how the Internet and other forms of e-communication can contribute to a new form of public sphere and thus a new form of democracy. He refers to a “political optimism” in relation to the ICTs through which e-democracy could replace the mass media democracy of *sound bite* television. According to the author, the Internet is not only a new public space it also creates the possibility of a trans-nationalised public sphere.

The vision of the reinvention of democracy through ICTs is shared by King (2006). In the paper, entitled *Democracy in the Information Age*, he writes in detail about the nature of democracy; the social effects of

ICT applications and their implications on the citizenship of the XXI century; on the governing parties' action and prospects concerning the future of e-democracy. Reflecting on the classic concept of democracy, he cites Maddox (2000 apud King 2006), who when writing about the Pericles' Funeral Oration, stated: 'Democracy depends much more on mentality, on unwritten laws and customs, that require a determined adherence to the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity, than to state institutions' (p. 82) Pericles demonstrated how individual and community interests are not only equal but inevitably connected to one another.

King (2006), reaffirms that in its original conception, democracy attributed power to the individual and recognised that its development and that of the state were inextricably associated. The suppression or oppression of individual freedom was considered as restricting the potential of the community as a whole. The health, well-being and the personal development of a citizen resulted in a healthier, more stable and more developed public environment, benefiting the community as a whole. People's point-of-views, although diverse, were significant in the development of a good government. Debate was encouraged and knowledge shared, to such an extent that individuals participated in community discussions, thus constructing a sense of community between the members of the city-state, who were directly involved in the results of the governance processes.

This concept of democracy changed with time and the community spirit itself faded away, giving way to the individualism of liberal democracy, as emphasised by Kakabadse, Kakabadse and Kouzmin (2003). However, primordial aspects of classic democracy have a particular meaning in the context of e-democracy, as King (2006) demonstrates. Other authors also refer to the rescue of democratic principles in the "electronic *ágora*". For this reason, many expressions are used while attempting to recapture its meaning.

However, the conceptualisation of e-democracy seems to be a challenge. From the definitions identified, in short, we can infer that e-democracy is related to the processes and structures of e-communication that make interactivity between government and citizens possible.

King (2006), points out that communication is fundamental in democratic processes and ICTs offer the possibility of real time interactivity. Finally, there is the dialogue possibility, which surpasses the monologue of mass media. Therefore, from the point-of-view of various authors this makes a genuine political debate possible.

Furthermore, the Internet has the capacity to surpass the representative structures, which facilitates the direct dialogue between representatives and those represented. The potential of direct communication through ICTs drives democracy in its most classic sense: the direct form of participation and engagement, principally with the community (King, 2006). With this, we foresee the revival of community participation, of citizen involvement in the public debate within the locality where he/she lives, the city.

Mahrer and Krimmer (2005) in *Towards the Enhancement of E-democracy: identifying the notion of the ‘middleman paradox’*, also point out the essential role of communication in e-democracy. They believe that it should be a continuous circle of close interactivity, involving the actors of the 3 spheres of the political process. They represent this interactivity in a conceptual model that they name the “society-media-politics (SMP)”, model represented in figure 1.

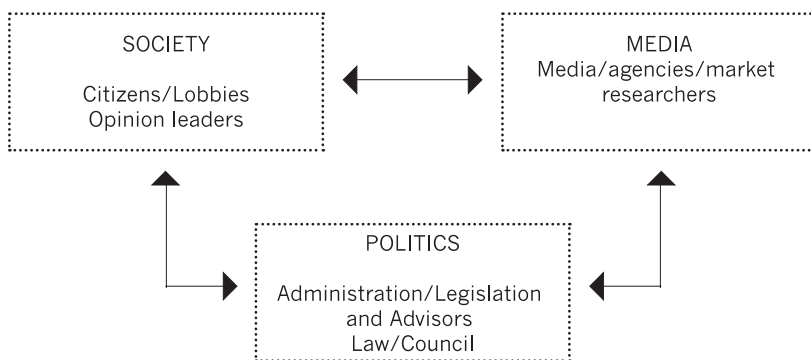


Figure 1 - The Players of the society/media/politics (SMP) model
Source: Mahrer and Krimmer (2005, p. 30)

This model of interaction through ICTs, according to the authors, generates four different stages of interaction: 1– public discussion of ideas; 2 – formal decision making; 3 – implementation and execution of decisions; 4 – public elections. The combination found between the different groups and these stages generates approaches of e-democracy within an e-government search portfolio proposed by them, and represented in chart 1.

Phases of interaction / Stages of political Communication	Information	Communication, Feedback & Consultation	Transaction and participation
Public discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Information System (eA) • Parliament Information System (eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chat/Discussion Boards with Administrators (eA) • Chat/Discussion Boards with Legislators (eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Public Consultation (eD)
Formal decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Information System (eA) • Parliament Information System (eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Legal Consultation (eA) • Online Petition (eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Popular Initiative (eD) • Online Referendum (eD)
Implementation and execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Information System (eA/eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Citizen Feedback (eA/eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Applications via Administrative Information System (eA)
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Information Service (eA) • Electee Programme Information System (eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chat/Discussion Boards with Politician Participation (eD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Election Stock Market (eD) • Online Voting (eD)

Chart 1 - The e-government research portfolio. eD, electronic democracy (interaction with legislation); eA, electronic administration (interaction with government and jurisdiction). Source: Mahrer and Krimmer (2005, p. 31).

However, Mahrer and Krimmer (2005) point out, as well as various other authors, that e-democracy is making some progress, much more than the application of ICTs in public administration. According to them, a number of factors can be attributed to this. Citing Macintosh (2003), they comment on a report from the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, about the promises and problems of e-democracy. This report identified some of the most important barriers concerning citizen digital engagement and the five main challenges, whilst using citizens as a reference point: dealing with the scale problem; building capable and active citizenship; ensuring coherence in the whole process of policy-making; evaluating the benefits and impacts of citizen digital engagement offer; and ensuring government commitment.

To demonstrate that barriers, other than those normally identified concerning citizens, are also related to decision makers Mahrer and Krimmer (2005) carried out some exploratory research on 201 politicians in the Austrian Parliament. Based on the model they proposed (fig.1), they tried to understand if politicians were noticeably promoting the evolution of e-democracy, at the same pace as the evolution of e-administration. The final result of Mahrer and Krimmer's research in Austria indicated, in brief, that politicians inhibit the evolution of e-democracy. Some reasons were clearly detected:

- 1 • Politicians believe in the deliberative system – they consider themselves more qualified for decision making than the common citizen, thus, forming, the deliberative elite; there is a generalised scepticism among these politicians about the concept of citizen political engagement. This scepticism is partly tied to the power loss that the representative elite would experience as a result of a greater civic engagement from some citizens, as depicted in the e-democracy model. The authors even state that politicians fear the loss of power.

- 2 • These positions make them believe that they are indispensable. The concepts of e-democracy are making evident the weakening (in the sense that the representatives – deputies, senators – are distancing their

actions from the interests of those represented, that is, the people) of political representation and are, clearly, a threat to politicians, on an individual level. It was made clear that the politicians in this group, the badly informed and also the well-informed and e-government experts are concerned with their political future. The authors emphasised, that the results cannot be generalised, because they were observed in a very small group of Austrian politicians, but serve as parameters for other studies.

Dealing with e-democracy, as we can understand from this brief presentation, involves a maze of interrelated concepts. It is clear that the biggest challenge is not the implementation of the ICTs, but the implementation itself, which involves a complex process of changes: of institutions and their processes; of the mentality and behaviour of politicians, of access to e-government and of citizen civic involvement. For this reason, for many people, complete e-democracy is utopian. To reach this state, the complete development of the government, e-governance and citizen literacy will be necessary.

Electronic Governance and Electronic Government

The expressions electronic governance and electronic government are often used in an interchangeable way, without it being very clear if they refer to the same concept. Even the expression electronic democracy is often used incorrectly. Having clarified the concept of electronic democracy and during the discussions about it, traces of independent definitions for these two expressions were found, so we then searched for this clarity in the recovered authors' works.

Riley (2003), who was "cited" in King's (2006) references, is a researcher at the Commonwealth Centre for e-Governance and in the text *The Changing Role of the Citizen in e-governance and e-democracy*, she distinguishes governance from e-government. Using the definition by Okot-Uma (2000), she indicated that e-government is the way in which public sector institutions apply technology to public administration and

conduct government business. The government uses new tools for the delivery of services that already exist. Reference to Okot-Uma was also found in some other browsed texts.

Concerning e-governance, Riley points out that it is a discipline that has been expanding within the area of public administration. It refers to the delivery of services, information and interaction with the citizen, in an electronic way, resulting in the creation of a new relationship between the citizen and the state. E-governance includes the vision, the strategies, the development plan, the leadership style and the necessary resources to promote this, i.e., these are the ways in which political and social forces are organised and applied.

Riley (2003) adds that e-governance includes the concept of e-democracy, based on the principle that a citizen interacts with the government, or exercises an influence over the legislative or public sector. She foresees the engagement of the citizen with the government and during legislative periods through the use of ICTs. It is a new dynamic that is being developed between citizens and governments.

The paper by Torres, Pina and Acerete (2006), *E-Governance Developments in European Union Cities: Reshaping Government's Relationship with Citizens* also makes a distinction between e-government and e-governance, in a similar way as Riley (2003). To them, the term electronic government is used as a kind of umbrella term, under which all ICT applications are placed. For this definition they cite the research of: the United Nations in partnership with the American Society for Public Administration (UN; ASPA, 2002), for which e-government is the use of the Internet for information and service delivery to citizens and the research of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD (2003), that regards the use of ICTs, as a tool to achieve better governance.

The authors state that currently the concept of e-government can have two meanings, one that is more restricted, which refers to the delivery of online services and a broader one that means the capacity of transforming public administration through the use of ICTs, in this way introducing the concept of e-governance. E-governance is a concept that was inspired from e-commerce. The first adopted appliance was that of

transactional services. In fact, as we infer from other authors, the private sector has served as a *benchmark* for the public sector, incrementing services. It is, as already said, a race of governments to maintain efficacy and efficiency, always pursued by competitive organisations thus exerting pressure on governments.

To emphasise the direction of e-governance, Torres, Pina and Acerete (2006), recall the concept of e-commerce, using the reference of Melistiki (2000), to whom e-commerce is the use of documents in an electronic form to support other functions of e-commerce (like finance, logistics, supplying processes), that require the exchange of information, contracts or currencies between organisations and individuals. This description indicates that e-commerce does not only deal with businesses.

In the public sector this version is only primarily associated to one way communication that is, the delivery of information in a static form, the government delivers information without any feedback or interaction from citizens. Only at a later stage, does the public sector start to incorporate the organisation and interactive properties of the Internet. The availability of information and service delivery in a greater quantity and available on a full time basis, creates the expectation of greater government transparency and accountability, more social inclusion and citizen empowerment to monitor government performance more closely. This should also contribute to maintaining citizen confidence in democratic institutions and processes. This conformation is known as e-governance (Torres, Pina & Acerete, 2006).

The discussions about e-democracies, governances and governments take us finally to the findings on Portals or *websites*. They mark the presence of governments on the Internet, give them visibility and are the tools that allow access to information, services and interactivity.

Electronic Government Portals

Portals, when defined in a practical way, can be considered as the doorway to the information and service world, in the case of the

government. However, they are much more than a static referential catalogue. With efficiency and adaptability, ICTs, can be represented as live organisms and, therefore, with systemic structures and circular communication processes, that should reflect the flexible dynamics of e-government, in contrast to the bureaucratic, linear and hierarchical structures.

The “delivery” of information and services 24-hours a day and seven days a week, besides providing permanent interactivity, allows citizens to search and use them at their convenience, surpassing the time and space barriers of the bureaucratic service desks, which are only available when it is convenient for government agencies. Practically all the authors refer to these characteristics when referring to government portals. West (2004), in the text *E-Government and the Transformation of Service Delivery and Citizen Attitudes*, emphasises that the interactivity condition of e-governance may increment “delivery” and government responsibility, allowing this, in the long term, to strengthen citizen confidence.

However, cultural and behavioural patterns do not evolve at the same speed as technology. Thus, the big challenge in order to integrate and make information and services available from a single Portal is to encourage different teams, from different government agencies, to interact so as to standardise different actions. This means a profound revision of the bureaucracy of each government agency and the sharing of information, conditions which meet strong resistance. Another big challenge is to make citizens able to use e-government. These changes are not so easily implemented and, everything indicates that this will take a long period of time. Thus, West (2004) cites the authors Davis (1999), Margolis and Resnick (2000) and Chadwick (2001) who predicted that Internet Technology will not change democracy in the short-term.

In this way, e-government evaluations are usually concerned with the relationship between government and society, based on the analysis of Portals: with the offer of information and services and or with the implemented mechanisms for the civic and political involvement of citizens or with government transparency. The authors’ papers listed here,

found on the cited bibliographic databases, address the theme under various aspects and a generalised impression seems to exist about the initial stage of e-government and this condition is detected in countries classified as developed.

It is worth noting that the listed authors use the term *website* or *one-stop-shop* with the same meaning as Portal, more commonly used in the Portuguese language. West (2004) uses the expression *government-services-portals*, or simply *portal*, in the sense that it integrates the various *websites* of the various government agencies. Bearing in mind the stages of transformation of e-government, he adopted a method of classification in order to measure the extent of change beginning with the portals: 1 – the publicity stage; 2 – partial delivery of services; 3 – portal stage with all services executed and integrated; 4 – interactive democracy. Using this classification he carried out a study with the objective of finding out if through the Webpages there was any transformation in service delivery and any change in citizen attitude.

Using a regression analysis method, West evaluated: 1 – the content of 3 550 government websites, of 27 North-American states, between 2000 and 2001; 2 – the expenditure of these states on ICTs in the years 1998, 1999 and 2000, based on a survey of the National Association of State Information Resource Executives; 3- how citizens see electronic government, based on a national opinion survey that took place in 2000. The results indicated that, generally, the potential of government transformation and citizen participation has increased. However, the majority were at the initial stages. He states that for a complete transformation it is necessary for: agencies to review the way they integrate and function to attain democracy and, most importantly he stresses his observation, that government agencies need to “advertise” the portals and services in the mass media.

McNeal, Tolbert, Mossberger, and Dotterweich (2003), in the paper *Innovating in Digital Government in the American States*, present an evaluation of the portals of 50 American states, their goal was to understand why some embraced e-government more extensively than others. The primary dependent variable was the percentage of services offered to citizens through portals. The second dependent variable was

the measurement of websites through an index based on 12 criteria: information through telephone contact, address, publications, databases, foreign language access, privacy policies, security policies, an index, disabled access, services, contact by email, search possibilities.

The results of McNeal, Tolbert, Mossberger, and Dotterweich (2003) study showed that e-government development is much more a question of innovation of a state and administration policies, than of the fulfilment of citizen demands or a search for e-democracy. According to them, the implementation of e-government may be explained by innovation theories that are used in the private sector. They discovered in this study, that e-government has developed further in governments that are already innovative on a normal basis. For instance, Republicans have more innovative characteristics than Democrats. The Republicans are oriented to a more conservative way of governing, their practices are based on the private sector and they are less attentive to the consequences of e-government in digital exclusion, that is, what matters is the efficiency of the machine, often pushed by the private sector. They then concluded that the adoption of e-government is a question of innovation and administrative reform, more than a mechanism to achieve e-democracy.

In the paper *The utilization of e-government service: citizen trust, innovation and acceptance factors*, Carter and Bélanger (2005), also emphasised that despite all the advantages of e-government, for instance, the increment of accountability, larger and more efficient access to information and services, the success and acceptance of government initiatives, depend on the disposition of citizens to adopt these innovations. Under this premise, they constructed a theoretical model to measure citizen intention to use e-government in a specific community. This model, according to Carter and Bélanger, integrated elements of the Technology Acceptance Model, developed by Davis (1989) and the Diffusion of Innovation Model by Rogers (1995), both used in the private sector.

Carter and Bélanger (2005) used this model in a piece of empirical research involving 106 citizens in a specific community. Of the 106 questionnaires, 105 were used for the analysis. Ages varied between 14

and 83 years of age. Despite the limitations of the study as it refers to a very small group and is only about the services of two government agencies, the authors indicate that the results are important to indicate the validity of the model and provide a basis for more complete studies, involving a larger population and more government agencies.

It is important to highlight some results and observations of Carter and Belanger (2005). They indicate that citizen intention of use rises as the citizen perceives the ease of use. In this way, a government portal should be easy to use and intuitive. The information should meet citizen needs by providing easy access. If a user experiences some difficulties in accessing the information he/she is searching for, their intention to use e-government services diminishes. Age and competence in the use of computers largely influences the intention of use.

With this the authors stress that governments should be attentive to the potential exclusion of online service benefits of certain citizens. The governments should not only develop intuitive and easy to use websites. They should develop educational material and train people to help others who have difficulty in using e-government services, in community centres or other organisations. (Carter & Belanger, 2005). This statement by the authors leads us to reconsider the growing importance of local governments. Thus, the works about local or municipal governments were gathered and will be commented upon from this point onwards in chronological order.

Discussing the reinvention of the local government, Ho (2002) in *Reinventing Local Governments and the E-Government Initiative*, demonstrated an optimistic vision about the potential of expanding local democracy. To him the Internet is more than just technology. It is a powerful tool to use for the transformation of philosophy and the organisation of government structures. He evaluates the tendencies in this direction, in contrast to the traditional bureaucratic paradigm. Based on an analysis of the contents of the websites of 55 major American cities and the results of a survey made with the webmasters of these cities, he states that various websites were moving towards the new paradigm. These cities adopted “one-stop-service centers” – the portals -, with the idea of

centralizing and integrating all services. With this there was a transformation of perspective within public administration.

However, Ho concluded that there were strong barriers to overcome. He detected a lack of cooperation between the departments concerning the provision of this information in order to feed into portals and that at that moment, the majority of portals were following the traditional departmental structure. He concluded that the Internet has the potential to promote local democracy, to expand the scope of deliberative politics and, then, reduce the barriers of information dissemination, but his analysis of portals demonstrated that several cities had not updated this potential. The offer of services was restricted. Few of them promoted citizen political engagement, or even virtual dialogue via online facilities.

Moon (2002) in the text *The evolution of E-Government among Municipalities: rhetoric or reality?* examined the rhetoric and the reality of e-government in municipal governments. Using the data of the survey about e-government in 2000, conducted by the International City/County Management Association and Public Technologies Inc., he examined two institutional factors (type and size of government), that contributed to the adoption of e-government by the municipalities. Generally, the study concluded that e-government has been adopted by many municipalities, but that they are still at an initial stage and have not obtained the expected results (reduction in costs, downsizing), that the rhetoric of e-government has promised. The study suggests that there are barriers impeding the progress of municipal e-government: financial, technical, people's skills, and legal aspects (such as privacy).

The interesting paper *E' the People: do U.S. Municipal Government Web Sites Support Public Involvement?*, Scott (2006), reports on an analysis made in 2004, of 3000 websites of the main metropolitan cities of the United States, with the goal of evaluating the facilities offered for the involvement of the local public. He states that after more than fifteen years since the beginning of the World Wide Web diffusion, the question of citizen involvement still generates much controversy. His final results indicate that from the municipal sites evaluated, few pre-

sented mechanisms that support the involvement of citizens, according to the theory of direct democracy.

Scott (2006), points out that the results of his study contrast with those of Kinder (2000), performed on 31 European city websites. In 29 cities Kinder found established policies of dialogue between the citizens and the local administrators. In 24 he identified programmes directed towards traditionally excluded groups and 19 present e-democracy services with service policies directed towards literacy and social inclusion. Of the 31 cities, 15% were offering opportunities for the involvement of citizens in the refinement of policies and in many cases had been doing so since 1995. Scott concluded by inviting researchers and academics to explore and enter the debate about the challenges associated with e-participation. Technology offers the opportunity to redefine the relationships between citizens and governments and makes citizens become more engaged. Citing Dutton (1999) he states that e-government can impede or facilitate the democratic process, everything depends on the interaction of policies, of management strategies and the culture of responsibility. The debate about the construction of policies for the application of ICTs in politics and in governance seriously needs to be initiated.

Torres, Pina and Acerete's (2006) paper, based on the concept of e-governance, as stated earlier, reports on an empirical study about the initiatives of e-governance analysing the websites of 35 cities with more than five hundred thousand inhabitants of 12 European countries, that represent about eighty percent of the European population. They analysed the sites between 2003 and 2004, based on a list of 133 items, from which 67 referred to e-services, 60 referred to e-democracy and 6 referred to Web Maturity (WM). They point out that the sites reflect the style of governance of cities and there are not many, whose sites reflect a high degree of e-democracy development. They emphasise that ICTs offer high potential for the development of e-governance, but that the study has demonstrated that reform within the administration structures is needed. They indicate that the classification of the cities in the studies, allows the cities to see their positions and to compare themselves to others.

We should emphasise, that no papers were recovered about Brazil or Portugal, as proposed in the initial objective. Obviously they exist, but they were not found in these searches or on these databases. As can be observed, the recovered papers are European or American. The same occurred on the LISA database. We infer that the politics of the indexing of these databases favour the material of developed countries. Other sources should be browsed in order to find Iberian-American material, for instance, Google Scholar as well as the Brazilian Scielo bibliographic database.

Analysis and final observations

We should remember, that the results presented here are a *continuum* of a Gepindi studies programme entitled – Infoinclusion – that has as a central theme – digital inclusion – the multiple facets of digital inclusion in different sub-projects, such as this one have been studied in partnership with UNICA. In this way, the question introduced in this study is directed towards digital inclusion. The Gepindi “thesis” is that digital inclusion and e-government are closely related and the portals are the interface between governments and citizens who need to be able to access them.

It is also necessary to emphasise, a factor that permeates the observations made from any point-of-view, that is the rising importance of information conveyed through ICTs, in all sectors of life and, in particular, in social organisation. Despite oscillations concerning the nomenclature and the nature of the new underlying society, information centralization is a peaceful issue, therefore often referred to as Information Society.

Therefore, one can say that everything is a matter of access to information. In this way, we can analyse observations about e-government as inserted in the concrete and operational concept of the information chain considered for the areas of Documentation and Information:

Know users/citizens needs • this is largely referenced in the analysed works. Therein resides the meaning of the importance of the return to the community, of service to the citizen in his/her locality. It is the customization of information and services offered to citizens by means of portals. This is only possible in a community. It is the return to personalized service and the close interaction between citizens and governing bodies. These concepts, diffused within the private sector make up the observations about e-government portals. It is in this way that the “electronic ágora” may occur.

Organise information to be found by the user/citizen • the purpose of the organisation of information is always to be found. Thus, organisation should also accompany user/citizen needs. As Carter and Belanger (2005) point out, portals should be easy to use and intuitive. However, it is necessary that people have the information competency to access and retrieve information and in addition be able to use it in their lives. This condition is expressed within the concept of *information literacy*, the understanding of which has become a world movement. It emerged in 1974, within the library environment of the United States and has been propagated, principally with the definition disseminated by the American Library Association (ALA), that conceptualises *information literacy* in this way:

To be competent in information, one has to be capable of recognizing when information is needed and one has to have the ability to effectively locate, evaluate and use it. In short, information literate people are those that have learnt to learn. They know how to learn, and they know how knowledge is organised, how to find information and how to use it in a way that other people learn from it (ALA apud Dudziak, 2003, p. 26).

The movement has become so important, that in 1989 the National Forum on Information Literacy, maintained by the American Library Association’s Presidential Committee on Information Literacy was created in the United States. The main challenge of this forum is digital

exclusion. Its position is that in an Information Society everyone has the right to access information, to enhance quality of life.

In November 2005, UNESCO, the American National Forum on Information literacy (NFIL) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), promoted the colloquium about *information literacy* and life long learning, in the Library of Alexandria. This event congregated important international institutions involved in the “information” area to Alexandria Library, a place symbolic for Universal Knowledge. Hence the “Alexandria Proclamation” was drawn up, and is documented in this report (High-Level..., 2006).

In this report placed *information literacy* and lifelong learning as the pillars of Information Society. They are the conditions needed for development, prosperity and freedom. They endow people with the skills to search, analyse and use information for their personal, social, educational and work purposes, and finally for social inclusion. They make up part of the Basic Universal Rights of the digital world. One of the topics considered for *information literacy* was: governance, citizenship and *information literacy*. This issue of information access through digital means as a question of citizenship and a basic universal right, was also discussed by Gepindi and reported in Silva, Jambeiro, Lima, and Brandão (2005).

The dissemination of information • in this case it means that e-government portals should be thoroughly disclosed. People do not know about the existence of e-government portals. West (2004) stressed this need, pointing out that, according to a survey performed by Hart/Teeter for the Council for Excellence in Government in 2000, only one third of Americans had access to government portals. Research conducted in Salvador (Bahia, Brazil), by Gepindi, shows that those responsible for digital inclusion programmes are aware of e-government and use and transfer this knowledge to those attending the digital inclusion programmes (Borges, 2005; Silva, Borges, Ribeiro & Sampaio, 2006). People who themselves consider that they are carrying out digital inclusion, do not know e-government. Recently, UNESCO (Uhlir, 2004) launched directives on policies for public information. These call our attention to

digital exclusion; the importance of the dissemination of government information in the public domain and underlines the responsibility of governments to promote access to this information. This premise points to the issue of having the skills to access, search, use and participate, completing the interactivity cycle proposed by Mahrer and Krimmer (2005), reproduced in figure 1.

Education of users/citizens • as with any other information system, the users/citizens do not have the acquired skills, so they need to be taught how to use the system. Thus the idea of *information literacy* or information competence leads us to the concept of *information literacy education*, or education for information, as Dudziak (2002) and Le Coadic (2004) state. However, many will not reach this competence level, not even with education, thus the role of intermediaries becomes fundamental. Carter and Belanger (2005) drew to our attention that governments should pay attention to the potential exclusion of online services and thus suggested intermediation.

Finally, e-democracy can be understood as a political paradigm, supported by the principles of classic democracy: of freedom, equality, fraternity, as Pericles thought, and recalled by King (2006). For it to come true, or in order to initiate the implementation process, policies and practical actions are needed within the domain of e-governance and e-government, but not only in the pure and simple sense of public administration and political science, but also in a way that involves policies of information and education.

In reality, returning to the question initially proposed, e-democracy will ultimately depend on Education, in its broader sense: civility development and solidarity incentive should be considered. Coleman (1999) talks about education for democratic citizenship allied with the teaching of ICTs in schools. To him education ought to form over the next generations, interactive citizens, politically engaged, facing the rising political apathy of youth at present. Hence, e-democracy should incorporate the recognition of everyone's right to access information. This implies not only education of the population to use it in their basic life needs, for

political participation and for civic responsibility, but also for the politicians themselves. As Mahrer and Krimmer (2005) stated, the barriers to e-democracy along with the lack of citizen skill, sustain political power that politicians would otherwise lose through direct democracy.

We should emphasise, that the e-democracy analysis among the authors listed here, has been practically restricted to the political participation of citizens. None of the works have emphasised - as argued by Gepindi, in their concept of digital inclusion - the need to make citizens capable of accessing e-information and services for daily life. We think it is not possible to consider the political sense, without satisfying basic life needs; after, all the political citizen is also a "human being". Here once again King's (2006) discourse is appropriate, remembering Pericles: "The health, well-being and personal development of the citizen resulted in a healthier, more stable and more developed public environment benefiting the community as a whole" (p. 17). Satisfying these conditions, the "political being" has the necessary conditions to develop. Without it, the people would be easily manipulated.

The transformation of society through the use of ICTs and in particular the Internet is a promise, and not yet a reality. It seems that it will be a long time before a total transformation occurs. However, although slow, principally for social reasons, it is a path with no return. The accelerated development of ICTs and its adoption by privileged sectors of society will either "direct" or "hinder" society as a whole towards this transformation. The private sector exercises an enormous pressure on the public sector. The banking sector is a typical example where the population needs to accept trade through ICTs, whether it is capable or not. However, optimism seems to be present in the academy as Bishop's (2004) title demonstrates *E-nthusiasm for E-governance*. He reports, with optimism, about the reigning optimism at the Australian Electronic Governance Conference, which took place in Melbourne in April of 2004. At the end of the tunnel: the e-democracy.

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4

Digital journalism

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Digital competence of communication professionals: confronting market demands and teaching experiences¹

Introduction

The profound transformations undergone by contemporary societies since the end of the last century (Castells, 1997, 2001; Fidler, 1997; Echeverria, 1999), with the gradual incorporation of digital technologies into the production processes, have given rise to one of a group of studies regarding the consequences of these changes with respect to the practice of communication professionals and more specifically regarding the necessary adaptations in order for the training of these future professionals to satisfy the labor market's demands (Pavlik, 2001; Garrison, 2001; Deuze & Dimoudi, 2002; Garcia Avilés & Leon, 2002; Quinn, 2002, 2005; Machado, 2003; Machado & Palacios, 2003; Singer,

¹ Previous versions of this paper were presented and or published elsewhere, in Portuguese.

2003, 2004; Deuze, Neuber & Paulussen, 2004; Machado, 2005; Deuze, 2006).

In a certain way, the variety of the subjects broached and of the perspectives adopted by the researchers in these works reflect the diversity of the questions that both professionals as well as teachers of communication are facing in view of the labor market's transformations. If on one hand there is a growing perception among the agents involved in the training of future professionals that the students should receive training that satisfies the new demands generated by the information digitalization processes, on the other hand, divergent positions persist concerning points as for example, the type of impact these processes will have on the training and even on the continuity of the professions in the communication field. To exemplify, while for Martinez Alberto (1997) and Singer (2003) the decentralization of investigation and publication in digital journalism places in check the concept of the journalist as a professional, for researchers such as Pavlik (2001), Deuze and Dimoudi (2002), Machado, (2003), Machado and Palacios, (2003), Diaz Noci (2001), Diaz Noci and Salaveria (2003), digitalization would be leading not to the disappearance but to increasing complexity of the practices of the professionals in the communication field.

In this chapter we present the results of a study that surveyed the views on this subject of lecturers teaching journalism at university level (Universidade Federal da Bahia - UFBA) and communication professionals in Salvador, capital city of the State of Bahia. The research is part of a broader project ("Digital Communicators" international collaboration project of the ICOD Network <<http://icod.ubi.pt>>) and was carried out with the coordination of Prof. Marcos Palacios, with the participation of a team of students in the undergraduate courses in Journalism and in Cultural Production at the Federal University of Bahia, by means of an elective discipline created for this specific purpose.

The work was performed from April to June 2005 and consisted of two stages. In the first stage, a survey was made of the current perceptions and expectations of the teaching staff of the Faculdade de Comunicação (FACOM) - Communication Faculty at the UFBA with regard to the digital competences of a communication professional, and in

the second stage, a survey was performed of the perception in current among representatives of the companies that absorbed the graduates of these courses.

The first stage of the research (involving the FACOM/UFBA teaching staff) was carried out by means of questionnaires filled in by the entire teaching staff of the Faculty. The second stage was carried out by means of interviews of a qualitative nature, following a pre-established initial agenda and involving nine representatives of companies with their main offices in the municipality of Salvador and linked to Social Communication activities.

In the second stage the objective was to identify the perceptions that this group of interviewees had regarding the digital competences needed by a recently graduated professional. As a way of guaranteeing the quality of the survey of the information furnished by the interviewees, each one of the interviews was conducted by at least two interviewers, following an agenda previously prepared and tested by means of a pilot program (Iorio, 2004).

Objectives

In accordance with the work plan drawn up at the I Meeting of the Rede Ibero-Americana de Comunicación Social - ICOD Network - held in December 2005, in Havana, the research was fundamentally directed to:

- a) identifying new professional needs of the companies/institutions directly active in the Social Communication Area or absorbing manpower trained in Social Communication;
- b) identifying the perceptions of what would be an “ideal profile” of the new professionals, from the point of view of the interviewees;
- c) identifying the interviewees’ evaluations regarding the quality of the professionals entering the local labor market, especially with respect to their digital competence;

- d) identifying the actions of the companies/institutions in connection with supplementing, updating and/or improving the professional qualification received in the higher education institutions.

Working methodology

Before setting out to listen to the market with regard to its perception of the Communicator's ideal profile in digital competences, we decided by way of previous clarification, to attempt to understand how the teaching staff involved in the training of these professionals in the oldest and most important communication faculty in Salvador (UFBA) perceived the importance of digital technologies in the professional training and in what way these technologies were being incorporated into each one of the disciplines taught in the two professional courses (Journalism and Cultural Production) offered by the faculty.

The survey sought to identify of the teaching staff's attitudes and perceptions with respect to digital technologies in the professional training of communicators, in the UFBA. Questionnaires were distributed to all the teachers of both professional fields, covering a total of 33 disciplines in progress (compulsory and elective). In addition to the questionnaires, qualitative interviews were performed with the Director of the Faculty, Coordinator of the Course Council and Department Chief.

Furthermore, this first stage served, in a subsidiary manner, as an opportunity for training the participating team, with respect to research techniques, general view of the field to be studied, charting of issues to be explored, etc.

Since the main objective was to auscultate the market, we will not present here the results *in toto* of the first phase of the research, it being sufficient to point out the main conclusions that were reached after application of the questionnaires and the performance of the interviews in FACOM/UFBA:

- a) the introduction of elements that we could classify as “digital content” has been proceeding, in a gradual way, at least since 1995, although there is still not any unified perception in the teaching staff with regard to the manner of associating and integrating digital competences with the specific nuclear elements that make up the objectives of each discipline, with the exception of those lecturers whose subjects directly involve digital technology matters, such as for example Digital Journalism Workshop, Communication and Technology and Audiovisual Communication Workshop;
- b) in almost all the subjects (29 out of 33) the lecturers required basic digital literacy (use of word processors, use of the Internet for research and participation in Discussion Lists, etc.), as a prerequisite, if not indispensable, at least desirable, for a good accompaniment of the course. This includes initial classes, therefore assuming that the student arrives at the University equipped with a “basic digital literacy”. Even lectures that, in a first approach, answered “none” to the question about the existence of “indispensable or desirable digital prerequisites” for their subjects, ended up by clarifying, on answering other questions, that using a word processor, for example, would be an indispensable or highly desirable requirement. What was deduced was that there already existed such a natural acceptance regarding the question of the use of the computer as a basic work tool for writing that those replying did not even identify this situation as “previous digital literacy”;
- c) There is no logical concatenation in the curriculum practiced with regard to the prerequisites of digital training among the various disciplines;
- d) the precarious nature or scarcity of equipment was indicated as the main obstacle to more effective work in the area of the training of digital competence.

Auscultating the market

The second stage of the research was devoted to auscultate the market, by means of qualitative interviews with representatives of social communication companies with their headquarters in the municipality of Salvador.

Companies comprising a diversified universe were selected, precisely in order to have the possibility of contrasting differentiated views with regard to the professional's ideal profile, with respect to niches of absorption of various types of qualified labour.

Accordingly, the study included journalistic companies (printed press, radio, TV and online), companies involved with advertising, press advisory services for companies and trade unions, cultural production and production of events. Despite our awareness that this selection fell far short of covering all the possible opportunities for communication professionals, we believed that it would be possible, by means of this decision favoring a diversified field, to obtain a more variegated and balanced result regarding the market's perception.

The companies included were also varying with respect to their size, being large, medium-sized and small, based on the supposition that a greater division of the work could lead to greater specialization, while inversely, a company with a smaller number of employees should require greater all-round versatility from its collaborators. In this connection, we included a range of organizations from *A Tarde*, a journalistic company that publishes the newspaper with the highest circulation in the Northern and Northeastern Regions of Brazil, with a daily press run of 50 thousand copies, makes available an online newspaper, operates as an Internet access provider, performs specialized printing services, etc., down to a very small company (*Karambola*) dealing with production of events.

All the companies included in the research have their headquarters in Salvador, with the exception of *Petrobrás*, which is a nation-wide and international company. The interviews were recorded in digital audio (.wav files) with one of them (with journalist Florisvaldo Mattos, Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *A Tarde*) also recorded in video.

The interviews

The following interviews were performed:

- Name: Liz Senna; Company: Rádio Metr pole FM; Position: Personnel Selection; Date of the Interview: 5/27/2005; Interviewers: Brisa Dultra and B rbara Affonso.
- Name: Pedro Tourinho; Company: Karambola (Production of Events); Position: Director; Date of the Interview: 5/29/2005; Interviewers: Brisa Dultra and B rbara Affonso.
- Name: Leonardo Villanova; Company: Portal I-Bahia (Rede Bahia); Position: General Manager; Date of the Interview: 6/8/2005; Interviewers: Brisa Dultra and Jo o Teixeira.
- Name: Cec lia Souto; Company: Chemical and Petroleum Workers Union of the State of Bahia – Brazil; Position: Communication Adviser; Date of the Interview: 6/9/2005; Interviewers: J nathas Ara jo and Lucas Mascarenhas.
- Name: Florisvaldo Matos; Company: A Tarde; Position: Editor-in-Chief; Date of the Interview: 6/10/2005; Interviewers: J nathas Ara jo, Marcos Palacios, Pedro Valente (video).
- Name: Adelino Mont’Alverne; Position: Director Id ia 3 Digital; Date of the Interview: 6/14/2005; Interviewers: J nathas Ara jo, Brisa Dultra.
- Name: Kard lcia Mour o; Company: Sindicato dos Jornalistas da Bahia (SINJORBA) - Journalists Union of Bahia; Position: President; Date of the Interview: 6/18/2005; Interviewers: Brisa Dultra and Lucas Mascarenhas.

- Name: Washington de Souza Filho; Company: TV Educativa/IRDEB; Position: Director General of IRDEB; Date of the interview: 6/20/2005; Interviewers: Jônathas Araújo and Pedro Valente.
- Name: Luciana Moherdau; Company: A Tarde; Position: Editor-in-Chief of A Tarde Online; Date of the interview: 6/29/2005; Interviewers: Brisa Dultra and Pedro Valente.
- Name: Paulo Dantão; Company: Petrobrás; Position: Chief Press Advisor (Salvador); Date of the Interview: 6/29/2005; Interviewers: Lucas Mascarenhas and Jônathas Araújo.

Results

What there is in common in the interviewees' comments

Initially we are presenting some elements that, because they were recurring in the interviews performed, appear to constitute certain areas of agreement among representatives of different segments of the market.

- a) Universal and natural character of the requirement for digital skills and aptitudes.

The first result to be emphasized is that, in all the cases included in the interviews, the capability of utilization of digital equipment and software was essential or highly desirable as part of the skills required by the companies for hiring recent graduates of Communication courses for positions on their staffs. This requirement, in a similar way to that which was observed among members of the teaching staff of the

Communication Faculty of UFBA, in the first phase of the research, is in many cases treated as “natural”.

There are recurring expressions of the type:

“[...] in some areas of the company, no digital skill is required [...]”

“The use of equipment and software is concentrated in certain sectors, while in others this is not very important”.

“Digital aptitude is not always required of the communication professional as an essential attribute”.

Differently from what might appear at first sight, these statements do not in fact express a situation involving the absence of the utilization of digital instruments and competence. On the contrary, on proceeding to delve into and make more explicit the ideas expressed, the naturalized character of minimum procedures involving the use of computers (utilization of word processors, e-mail, navigation on the Internet, etc.) is observed, leading to the conclusion that this type of digital aptitude fails to be perceived as such.

“The use of digital technologies is more concentrated in the creation sector” (Advertising Agency).

“In the technical area there is a strong utilization of digital technologies, in the creation of vignettes, effects” (Television).

“There is a technical sector that looks after the part specifically involving computers and digital technology of the communication processes within the company”.

Nevertheless, on describing typical production processes, the interviewees had recourse to expressions of the type:

“The cameraman arrives from the street with his camera, he will unload the material from it into a non-linear editor; the reporter will make a previous editing and will send that file by means of the server to the Editor, who finalizes the editing until arriving at a format to be shown” (Television).

“Today no journalist works without a word processor and there are no problems with this, since any graduate from a course knows how to use a program like Word and our processors are very similar to these basic programs, with few differences that can be easily learned”.

“I have a close relationship with a colleague, who is my student in the faculty, who says he’s able to imagine how journalism was done five years ago, which is already a limit, but ten years ago he’s not able to imagine [...] Without the Internet, how is it that information used to be preserved?”

What appears possible to conclude is that people in a command situation in the companies tend to associate “digital aptitude” to more specific and specialized tasks, whether in terms of equipment or in terms of handling software, no longer perceiving and classifying as digital skills the everyday use of a computer as a technical work instrument (to produce, seek, evaluate, classify and store information). Its utilization as a machine for personal communication, basic word and image processor, research instrument, etc. is considered “natural”.

b) Flexibility and not hyper-specialization.

There was a strong convergence among the interviewees in the perception that what is more important than specific competence in

handling equipment and software, are adaptability and capability of rapid learning, which are desirable, since the changes occur in a very rapid way with regard to processes and programs adopted:

“[...] we don’t look for specialists in software. Softwares change.”

“We produce contents. The softwares help, but they don’t guarantee anything [...]”

“The old-time journalists took a long time to get accustomed to using a terminal, instead of a typewriter. Today this isn’t any problem for young people, who adapt very rapidly to the different work platforms.”

“Knowledge of advertising isn’t knowledge of a tool. If (the professional) is familiar with design, journalism, hypermedia, and works with HTML, with Flash, this helps a lot, but we know that the main thing isn’t the tool. We don’t look for specialists in softwares [...] we don’t want a super-specialist in tools [...] the tool only helps to do the work [...]”.

It is obvious, however, that this adaptability to which the interviewees refer cannot be acquired except through intensive training in an entire range of “basic” software (for editing text, image, audio, among others). This training process must be seen, therefore, as a means for improving qualifications rather than merely as an intense specialization in some specific type of software.

“Working with a word processor is basic, but I would also add the treatment of images in Photoshop for a journalist, the rest is browser, familiarity with the Internet”.

- c) Concern about humanistic, ethical and intellectual background in a broad sense.

The interviewees also converged with reference to their concern in the sense that the courses should continue to provide “ample” training and not just “in technicalities”.

“A great knowledge of softwares and computers is no advantage if the reporter doesn’t know how to investigate, if he doesn’t perceive what is news, what is newsworthiness, if he doesn’t know how to choose the correct angle”.

“Journalistic “scent” (faro) continues to be a fundamental element”.

“I believe the thing continues to be simple. If the professional masters the language, if he understands the basic mechanisms of the profession [...] the knowledge begins to have the facility of digital technology. [...] the discussion that takes place in the faculty is very far from the reality of the market, from the discussion in television, but this discussion will benefit the training, call the market’s attention to this new type of professional. But it also doesn’t help if the guy doesn’t understand that you work with limits... Nobody is going to be able to do telejournalism with an upside down camera!”

“Nobody can be a journalist if he doesn’t know who Sartre is and that his centennial is being commemorated [...]”.

On the other hand, with reference to specifically technological aspects, it was pointed out by more than one interviewee that it did not suffice to know how to use search engines on the Internet, but it was necessary to understand the very functioning of the Network, with regard to several aspects (technical, sociological, political, commercial, etc.) in order to be able to utilize it with more effectiveness.

The interviewees, especially the more experienced ones and those in a higher age bracket, expressed concern regarding the ethical issues

involved in the use of digital technologies, emphasizing that the speed of the operations and the facility for editing require an even more solid training with reference to ethics and a humanistic view of communication processes.

d) Internet Culture as a differential factor in the absorption of recent graduates.

It was obvious that familiarity with digital media was a decisive element in the selection processes for professionals in the companies studied. Much more than specialized knowledge of software, the tendency of the interviewees was to place higher value on the “Internet culture” already acquired, or what could be classified, using the expression of one of the interviewees, as “being on good terms with the Internet”.

“[...] I select those who make use of it, not just to see an e-mail, but is on the Internet everyday, knows how to download music, has already downloaded films, knows what’s going on, is in Orkut [...] this is an interesting profile”.

“People are horrified when I say that I look at the candidate’s profile in Orkut, before the interview for selection to work in the company: to know his interests, the things he likes [...] it’s important, it shows insertion in the Internet”.

“[...] a journalist who uses the Internet well, in one or two months adapts to the online work”.

“I give preference to whoever already has Internet culture. A guy that converses in MSN, has his blog [...]”.

“We want (as trainees) students with an enterprising spirit, curiosity, that is not limited to doing what is said [...] we want proactive people [...]”.

Specific Aspects

Let us go on now to more specific aspects, regarding which greater variations of perceptions were observed among the interviewees. These variations are associated mainly with three factors:

- a) positioning of the company with relation to the Web (main or support media);
- b) size of the company;
- c) field of activities.

a) The company and the Web: means or end.

In the first place it is important to highlight that among the companies studied, two possess sectors specifically devoted to activities on the Web, while one of them was created based on digital activities alone. In these cases, the Web and the company's presence on the Web appear as the final purpose of their activities and not as a means of support and a base for other communication and content production activities, generating requirements for more specific digital competence, although not always as multifaceted as might be supposed.

The journalistic company A Tarde has been producing since 1997 an online newspaper, alongside its printed edition, in which 18 people are working, 10 being stable professionals and eight trainees.

The advertising company Idéia 3 three years ago created a sector (Idéia 3 Digital) specifically devoted to the production of advertising on the Internet. Today six professionals are working in this area, with growth plans for eight professionals over the short term.

On the other hand, I-Bahia is an information portal on the Internet, therefore owing its very existence to the Web's emergence as a communicational and informational environment. The portal is part of the Bahia Network (associated with the Globo Network). I-Bahia's editorial room is decentralized, since it uses the entire structure of the *Bahia Network* (newspaper, radio and TV). 10 people are working in *I-Bahia*.

The companies that work with the production of content for the Web require a wider range of digital skills from the people they hire. This results from the very multimedia nature of the Internet and therefore of the content generated to be made available in this support. Nevertheless, this all-round versatility appears to be characteristic of very small, almost craftwork businesses. Growth tends to lead to specialization of digital competences.

“The Idéia 3 Advertising Agency has been in existence for almost 17 years [...] is one of the largest outside the Rio de Janeiro – São Paulo axis. A need then arose to work on the digital area. And a duo was created, a duo for creation, that had more interest in the Internet and knew how to make sites, work with the Internet...From there it evolved into a Digital Department, with an editor, a designer, and an art director, to provide what was needed in the digital part: making a banner, a pop-up. But in the last two years this department became too small and the proposal was for Idéia 3 Digital to become another company [...] that works with interactive communication [...] the product that we work with is different”.

b) Large or small companies: division of work vs. specialization.

In a large company such as A Tarde or IRDEB (Educational Radio and TV), the division of the work is much clearer, with less all-round versatility with reference to digital qualifications. In small companies or sectors with few employees (press adviser sectors) the multiplicity of duties is necessarily greater.

“In the case of IRDEB we’re doing everything possible to position the professionals according to their areas of specific training; only journalists work in the journalism sector, only advertising professionals work in the commercialization sector and so on. Each type of professional has differ-

ent digital skills. The advertising personnel have to handle sophisticated graphic programs [...]"

"We have the printed newspaper and the online newspaper. In the printed newspaper, the journalists just use a terminal to key in their stories. They don't have any need for a great knowledge of softwares, but they all have to know how to investigate, seek out information, including on the Internet" (Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper A Tarde, printed edition).

"I'm in favor of partnership. Why would I buy a digital camera and put my reporter to making a video, if I can make a partnership with (TV) Bandeirantes? I don't believe that multimedia should be on the basis of 'do it yourself'. You have to have a structure to make a good product. I don't believe it's a case of taking a camera in your hand and going out somewhere. In that way you're doing backyard journalism" (Editor-in Chief of A Tarde, online edition).

"I think somebody would ask for professionals with digital competences in other television stations, but not on TVE (Educational TV) [...] from my own experience, there is little demand for this at this time. Digital technology functions as a support. You work with the Internet to help you in terms of research. You work with software that enables you to do editing of texts; with specific software that controls and lets you, in the newsroom, prepare a text that you send directly to the newscaster, who will read it on the spot. You have the technology that allows you to control the display of the programming and [...] there are already some processes in the editing area. In the so-called technical area, in the so-called operational area, there is more utilization of this equipment; and this applies to any TV station. Judging by the knowledge and experience I have, today in the

television stations it's in the area of art editing, of graphics computing, that you have greater specialization of duties".

In the case of *A Tarde*, the printed journalism sector continues to follow the traditional division of work, with reporters, editors, photographers, designers, etc. These duties began to involve digital skills, since the equipment was "digitalized" (photographic cameras, portable recorders) and the graphic processes began to be planned by means of specialized software.

In the case of the online journalism sector, the journalists sometimes go out on the street for investigation, but in most cases the news comes from the news agencies, from the newsroom of the printed newspaper and from the press advisors, with the online journalists responsible for adapting it to the pattern of the newspaper on the Internet. On the other hand, it was clear that, in the case of the journalists working on the online version, the flexibility between genres is much greater than in the printed version. The same journalist can cover and update events in the political, economic, crime areas etc., depending on the need and the flow of the events, since agility is an essential element in online coverage.

"We have to produce content in several areas: economy, local, politics [...] for this reason here we don't train specialists. The ideal journalist for us is a generalist, (with) the capability for investigating several matters [...] You publish rapidly [...] Journalists have to arrive here knowing how to produce a final text in any area".

c) The Professional's profile by fields of activities.

Despite the differences in requirements according to the companies' fields of activity, the most important aspect to be noted is the convergence evidenced by the fact that all the interviewees focused on the central importance of the Internet and its peculiarities.

The major differences in terms of technical requirements in the ideal profile of the recent graduates from communication courses occur in the characterization of professionals more concerned with the area of creation and design, especially in advertising, with requirements for manipulation of more specific programs for design, image treatment, etc. However, since the advertising agencies also produce content for the Web, the characterization of the Internet as a central element occurred also in the interview with the advertising professional included in the research.

In the case of the journalistic companies and press advisers, the most important aspect is the recent graduates' capability of using the Internet and their familiarity with techniques for gathering, evaluating and classifying information.

The idea recurs that the Internet is a communication media (or environment) with its own characteristics that differ from those of the traditional media. Emphasis was given to the necessity that the recent graduates from the faculties have a (theoretical and practical) comprehension of these specificities.

“On the Internet the concepts are different. Doing advertising for the Internet isn't the same as doing it for the printed (media)”.

“On the Internet the edition never ends, never closes, it's direct, there can't be any arrangements [...]”

“The communication faculties are still very much concerned with the mass communication media, newspaper, radio, TV [...]”.

“The training (in the advertising schools) still works more with the traditional media [...] they still don't have any digital creation, or very little [...]”.

“[...] the professional has to understand how the Internet operates [...] You can't want to do things on the Internet as if it were radio, television. This has to be more developed in the students ... knowing that interactive communication has its own characteristics. We have to understand how the Internet's environment is, in order to create, do business [...]”.

“There are people who adapt and people who don't adapt to doing journalism on the Internet. The Internet is a fast media, with pressure. We have the television on, listening to the radio, navigating through the sites. The person has to have rapid reasoning, be agile”.

“A myth was created that online journalists have to deal with technicalities, know how to operate cameras, videos. But how much does it cost to maintain a multimedia structure in the company? [...] This is very complicated. Basically, you depend on other departments (that produce other formats). Technical knowledge doesn't have priority. It's good, but it doesn't have priority. Journalists have to produce good (written) content”.

“The faculties have no way of giving complete training. You don't have any journalists who arrive with training in design [...] You have technicians who study programming. It would be an exaggeration to require programming in Flash from a journalism graduate, since for this we employ designers [...] The problem is that the graduates frequently don't know how to write a good title for a piece of newsprint. It's necessary first to train people who have good text [...]”.

Theory, Practice and Text

In many of the recorded conversations, it was obvious that the traditional discussion persisted regarding the ideal balance between Theory and Practice in the Communication Courses. This dichotomy, which recurs throughout the history of the creation and development of Communication Courses, reappeared in the context of the digital technologies:

“The knowledge accumulated in the Faculty is sufficient, but practice more directed to the everyday routines would be lacking [...]”.

“[...] good cultural background, final text. Why final text? We publish rapidly. The trainees have to know already how to write when they arrive here”.

“I believe it’s important for the professional to have practical knowledge of the operation of hardware and software, even if it’s not for direct utilization, but be familiar with it, know how it operates. This helps to prepare the product [...] We in the press adviser’s office of the union (of chemical and petroleum workers) have an enormous dependence on the CPD (Data Processing Center) for the digital part”.

“[...] it’s also necessary to understand the commercial side of the story, there are many who romanticize doing journalism and changing the course of things [...] it’s necessary to have sales targets, mainly on the Internet, which is still being consolidated [...] we have to create the market [...] the businessman finances up to a certain point, but he wants to have a return. It’s not a question of selling and placing professional ethics in check, but he needs to understand that what he produces has to be consumed. It’s necessary to look outside, see what people want ... he

has to be plugged into what is happening [...] we have to be read, accessed [...]".

Digital training in the company

All the companies included in the research, without exception, utilize trainees on their staffs. It was a consensus among the interviewees that it is during the training period that the recent graduate from the schools are submitted to the routines of production, being trained by their more experienced colleagues, being able to adapt or not to the requirements of the work in the company.

"We have today around 25 university level trainees, most of them journalism students, and we have around five or six on the secondary school level, and of those on the secondary level only one is from the administrative area. Therefore, we have nearly 30 trainees [...], a high level, because of the 150 employees, almost 20% are trainees".

"In practice it's not easy to perceive who is a trainee and who is a professional. The trainee has access to everything, he moves around through the entire network".

"To expect people to come readymade is going too far. We have to choose people who adapt to the maximum extent. Nobody comes readymade, with experience".

"[...] we try to perceive the potential [...] technique is a detail, something that is improved in the company".

"Here the trainee (in A Tarde On-line) learns the hierarchy of the news, learns to make a front page, learns where a photo enters [...] the other important point is the agility in doing a story, he becomes agile".

“On the Internet the rhythm is different [...]”

Only A Tarde offers occasionally courses for recycling and improvement of its employees. In the other companies, the recycling has to be sought by the interested professionals themselves and the learning of new techniques occurs in a spontaneous way, as an exchange of knowledge between colleagues. Some of the interviewees, especially those from the trade union area, showed concern regarding the possibility for the growth of exploitation of the workers, as a consequence of the flexibility resulting from the new technologies.

“The Union (of Chemical and Petroleum Workers) supports the qualification of its professionals. There isn't any policy for planning, but if there's a demand by the professionals they generally satisfy it [...] They pay for courses, if they're requested [...] we're the ones who look for the courses and demand that we receive support in order to take them [...] But it's not on the part of the company, it's our initiative [...]”.

“Within the company the people that are familiar with software help the others, teach them. But we have to be careful with the segmentation of the activities, so as not to take away the job of other professionals [...]”.

“With the digital technologies the level of exploitation will increase, since one single professional will produce for several types of media. One single reporter, one single journalist [...] will do stories for television, for the newspaper and for online [...] One will do everything for three? And how will the question of remuneration be handled? Will the professional be paid for all this? The professional is losing rights [...] there's no more overtime”.

In addition, the practice of the systematic filling of work positions by utilizing trainees was questioned, a situation which has been loosely defined legally and has received little vigilance on the part of the government entities having jurisdiction or the trade unions.

Identifying Competences

We will try to synthesize below the main digital competences detected based on the interviews performed. It should be emphasized that the list does not necessarily represent the perception of the authors of this text, but rather only a compilation, based on the statements recorded.

	Competence
General	Basic use of the computer as a tool for searching, evaluation and classification of information (Basic Digital Literacy)
	“Internet Culture”: everyday efficient use of varied resources offered by the Network (Advanced Digital Literacy)
	Basic knowledge and utilization of softwares for editing text, treatment of image, audio, visual programming (Basic Digital Literacy)
	High capability for learning the use of new programs (Advanced Digital Literacy)
	Basic knowledge of the different “languages”: text, photography, video, audio, infography
	Theoretical knowledge of Networks and their operation
	Clear perception of the specificities of the digital environment as a place for creation of media content different from the traditional media
	Knowledge of public and private administration, legislation, copyright law, etc.
	Some idea of “business models” for different media environments
	Solid humanistic background and good knowledge of Current Events

Journalism (all supports)	High degree of mastery of investigation techniques, especially in telematic networks
	Clear perception of criteria for newsworthiness and establishing a hierarchy of information
	Knowledge and handling of narrative techniques that enable the production of texts appropriate for different media supports
	Capability for moving around among different journalistic genres
	“Final Text”. Agility in the production of texts
	Final editing capability
TV	Capability of non-linear editing of images
	Perfected journalistic interview technique
Rádio	Basic knowledge of audio softwares
	Newscasting capability
Online Journalism	High capability for obtaining information by means of the network.
	Agile text, capability for synthesis.
Portal	Knowledge of the dynamics of a complex site
	Perfected hypertextual narrative capability
Advertising	Advanced knowledge of programs for treatment of image and design
	Basic knowledge of HTML, Dreamweaver, Flash and other programs for production of sites
	Knowledge of the specificity of advertising in telematic environments
	Servicing, Creation/Design, Editing remain as separate sectors, requiring specific qualifications

Chart 1 - General and Specific Competences

Conclusions

The first conclusion to be drawn is that, in a way similar to the results obtained by Deuze, Neuberger and Paulesen (2004) in research developed in Germany, Belgium and Holland, there is a disparity between the requirements identified in the market and the inclusion of digital technologies in the teaching of professionals in the communication field. This situation is aggravated because on the part of the professional leaders, in the various types of work, there prevails a view of the natural characteristic of the digital competences necessary for social communicators, and there is a lack of capability for comprehension of the true significance of the structural changes that society is undergoing in this beginning of the millennium and the consequences of this process for communicational practices.

A second conclusion involves differences of opinion in the structuring of new teaching programs, having in mind the perceptions of the new requirements of the market. The controversy as such is nothing new nor does it reflect a local situation, as can be seen in works such as those of Skeener and Gasher, (2001), Reese and Cohen, (2000), Frölich and Holtz-Bacha, (2003), and Burgh, (2003). The perception is essential that the restructuring of the teaching plans takes into account the need for an integration of the activities in all the subjects, in order that the future professional can have during the course the possibility of guided learning of the various digital competences essential for practicing the profession in the new context.

A third conclusion, which encounters support in the specialized bibliography (Pavlik, 2001; Machado, 2003; Quinn, 2002, 2003; Singer, 2004), suggests that instead of a super-specialization, the future professional in the communication field should be capable of adapting to a variety of duties resulting from the process of convergence in the companies' production systems. If this type of inference is correct, all indications are that the professional most appropriate for the new market will have to have the capability of understanding processes, planning actions, interpreting scenarios and, more important, being sufficiently flexible to on one hand, adapt, and on the other hand, react in a creative

way to the constant adjustments of the production processes undergone by the communication companies.

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Research on participative journalism in Brazil: a survey of the state of the art¹

Introduction

Worldwide interest in the study of participative journalism has been growing in recent years and it is generally accepted that journalistic practices are undergoing considerable transformations as a result of this expanding conversational dimension (Gillmor, 2004; Bowman and Willis 2003; Bruns, 2005; Reese, Rutigliano, Hyun and Jeong, 2007, among others) brought forwards by mechanisms that facilitate production and circulation of information through different participative communication systems, such as forums, blogs, and sites of the open source type.

¹ Previous versions of this paper were presented and or published elsewhere, in Portuguese.

In this study we produced a preliminary survey of thematic concentration and methodologies of research on blogs and other interactive models of journalistic publication in recent Brazilian contributions in this area.

It should be noted, however, that synonyms sometimes employed for participative journalism (civic journalism, public journalism, open source journalism, community journalism and citizen journalism) are not always equivalent. This is the case of civic journalism, also known as public journalism (Traquina, 2002). Participative journalism and civic journalism have some characteristics in common, such as the participation of the public as content producer and the importance given to the plurality of voices. Civic journalism arose at the end of the 1980s in the U.S.A. as a proposal to attract more readers, who were skeptical regarding the contents of the newspapers, but its implementation may or may not include the formation of networks based on common interests. Civic journalism is an important a field of study in Brazilian communication studies, but it is not included in this survey. The works examining readers participation on mainstream online media – through the adoption of forums, readers comments and other participative mechanisms – and were also left out of this survey.

Concerns with generalizations and with the need to refine definitions and delimitations (Mielniczuk, 2007) as well as attempts to establish the characteristics of the different experiments by penetrating the tenuous border of each one of them (Santos, 2007) have permeated many Brazilian studies on participative journalism and there is a growing awareness by producers of participative sites concerning the need to have an established and explicit position the matter. In the Brazilian site *Overmundo*, for example, participative journalism is defined as means which include readers' comments on the stories, and the collaborative form is related to the action of two or more people contributing to the preparation of journalistic contents. Open source journalism, on the other hand, would entail the possibility of any person altering a content of a page on the web (Foschini & Taddei, 2006).

The brief survey presented in this article has utilized the Thesis and Dissertation Database of CAPES (Coordination of Higher Level Per-

sonnel), a Research Board of the Brazilian Education Ministry. Articles on the subject – published in the most important Brazilian periodicals – have been included. The databases made available by *stricto sensu* Postgraduate Programs in Communication in Brazilian universities were also consulted. Those sources constitute a reliable – although by no means exhaustive – universe for a first approach to the subject.

The Blog effect

After one a decade of existence, Blogs are considered to be a major phenomenon giving impulse to participative journalism. According to data from the *Technoratti* report, many independent blogs are accessed more than the mainstream media (Sifry, 2007). In the beginning, mainstream media either ignored or antagonized the blogs; since the middle of the year 2000, however, there has been a growing movement for their adoption by digital dailies from various countries, whether through blogs produced by journalists linked to the vehicle itself, or by providing space in their sites for the creation of “readers’ blogs”.

The blog phenomenon has been discussed by Brazilian researchers from different perspectives. Blogs are seen as intimate diaries on the network (Carvalho, 2001; Sibilía, 2003; Schittine, 2004), a place for conversation of virtual communities (Recuero, 2003a; Primo & Samaniotto, 2006), a system of communication which has transformed journalism (Recuero, 2003b; Silva, 2003; Quadros, Rosa & Vieira, 2005; Quadros & Sponholz, 2006), a space for authorship and identity on the web (Adghirni, 2006), a possibility for online socialization of people with special needs (Passerino and Montardo, 2007), a dialogical and democratic potential (Aldé, Chagas & Escobar, 2007), a direct heir of webjournalism (Escobar, 2007), a form which is beginning to gain credibility (Christofolletti & Laux, 2006; Christofolletti, 2007) and a broadening of the journalism field (Palacios, 2007). In this study we have given priority to research which makes explicit the methodology utilized and discusses possible relations between blogs and journalism.

The main research works on this topic in Brazil date from 2003. In this period, Raquel Recuero proposed in her articles a classification for analyzing the diverse types of blogs and directly contributed to stir interest and foster the development of new research on the topic. Jan Alyne Barbosa Silva (2003) appears in the CAPES registry as the author of the first dissertation in Brazil analyzing the blog phenomenon with emphasis on journalism. Since her first articles on this topic, she has sought to systematize constituent elements of a blog (tools and pages) which result in the interaction between bloggers and readers. In order to observe the symbiotic relation between journalism and blogs (Hiller, 2002), new skills and challenges for the profession (Lasica, 2003), Silva carried out research with bloggers to chart some of the uses and technical and social appropriations of tools and pages.

Paulo Munhoz (2005) sought to characterize, by means of an exploratory study and charting, new forms for structuring photographic messages and production models and circulation of images in blogs and in open agenda vehicles.

Artur Vasconcellos Araújo (2006) performed a case study of the Brazilian blogs *Observatório de Imprensa* and *No Mínimo* with the intention of verifying the uses which the two media organizations made of this system of communication. For this purpose, he identified and analyzed quantitative aspects (volume of material produced, by means of the analysis of files, frequency or rhythm of production of the stories, size of the news item and the nature of the topics covered) and qualitative ones (seeking to apply concepts deriving from the Theory of Enunciation to the analysis of the published texts).

Other research also dealt with the blogosphere's influence on the traditional media. For example, Quadros and Sponholz (2006) made a comparative study of the use of journalistic blogs in the mainstream media of Brazil and Germany. The research intended to try to answer three main questions: "What is news for these blogs? Why are they called blogs? What are the main trends of this system which has provoked transformations in journalism? Bolaño and Britos (2007) perceived that certain blogs, especially the journalistic ones, "are influential in the agenda-setting of the hegemonic media".

Josiany Fiedler Vieira (2007) recorded the blogs' evolution based on the concept of remediation (Bolter & Grusin, 1999). For this purpose, he highlighted references which treat blogs as the personal diaries which reach the pages of the web, moving from private to public, and those which see blogs as a phenomenon which modifies the performance of journalism with the public's participation. In the case study of Ricardo Noblat's blog, he made an analysis of the contents of posts which show the communicational interaction between the blogger and the reader, the author's opinion and the multimedia resources utilized. The study is supplemented by in-depth interviews with Ricardo Noblat and other bloggers. Previous studies already devoted attention to Noblat, considered the first Brazilian journalist to create a political blog. Inara Souza da Silva (2006) confirmed blogs as sources of information for journalists, utilizing various research methods: case study, systematic observation, in-depth interviews and content analysis of Noblat's blog.

To the extent that the mainstream media's interest in this system of communication increases, the number of Brazilian researchers interested in studying aspects related to the blogs' credibility grows. Rogério Christofoletti and Ana Paula Laux (2006), based on survey studies performed in various countries, including Brazil, discuss blogs as a system of reputation and by means of case studies try to ascertain the communicational relation between bloggers and readers. In five Brazilian journalistic blogs analyzed (*Querido Leitor*, *No Mínimo*, *Reinaldo Azevedo's Blog*, *Josias de Souza's Blog* and *Noblat's Blog*) the authors observe the bloggers' posts, the daily average of postings, readers' comments in the period analyzed, average of comments, comments/posts ratio and emphasis on the most commented posts.

The communicational relation is also studied in the research of Alessandra Aldé, Viktor Chagas and Juliana Escobar (2007), which classifies the twelve political blogs analyzed in three categories: those located on a large site, the independents – anonymous or signed, of journalists and authors without the same professional and social recognition. For Aldé, Chagas and Escobar (2007), the public's participation can be considered more as a supplement of an opinion than as a debate. It

is “a type of conversation, which if it is not civil in the sense of scrutinizing the most rational solutions for the public interests, is certainly the place for position-taking, passion, politics and expression of public opinion.” (p. 37).

While Blood (2002) perceives blogs as a participative media, Escobar (2007) disagrees. For her, most blogs are developed by a single individual, and therefore the blogger (primary agent) is the one who decides on the existence or not of a secondary agent, the readers. Escobar also proposes a classification (which ranges from 0 to 4 degrees) in order to understand the communicative relation of the owner of the journalistic blog and his secondary agents. The higher the degree of a blog, the more possibilities the secondary agent has for participating.

Raquel Recuero amplifies the typology of blogs created by her in a previous study on social interactions (2003a) in order to analyze the journalism carried out in warblogs of the war in Iraq (2003b). In this last study Recuero divided the blogs into five categories: electronic diaries (personal events), publications (information of an opinionative type), literary (fictitious stories), clippings (information published in other places) and mixed publications (information and personal events). Her typology has contributed to the development of a considerable number of research works and inspired other proposed classifications, such as the one created by Quadros, Rosa and Vieira (2005) with greater attention to specific characteristics of the journalistic practice. While the typology proposed by Recuero classifies the blogs according to narrative formats, Quadros et al. proposes a record of their evolution and of variations in journalistic practices associated with them.

Palacios (2007) took as his starting point ideas suggested by Sorrentino (2006) and sought to develop and apply them to Brazilian cases. Based originally on the concept of “field” (*campo*), developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, Palacios sought to identify effects produced by the heterodoxy in the functioning of blogs, with relation to the *habitus* of the journalistic field. The work tests and illustrates the ideas first developed by Sorrentino with regard to the functioning of a series of Brazilian blogs.

Participative forms of webjournalism

Apart from blogs, other forms of participative journalism have come under scrutiny in Brazilian academic research, with special interest regarding the model known as “open source journalism”. While the individual mark of the blogger preponderates in the blog, in the other forms of participative journalism the main characteristic is the collaboration between those involved. From the research work carried out for this study, we also noted the attention devoted to the interacting and communicational relations provided by these forms which incorporate tools and methods devoted to the perfecting, by means of the collaboration between the participants, of the information published.

Several Brazilian studies explore the potential of the production of “Open Source”, both in articles and monographs (Schwingel, 2004; Silva Jr., 2004; Antoun, 2004; Holanda, 2004; Quadros, 2005; Brambilla, 2005; Breier, 2004; Primo & Träsel, 2006; Antoun & Pecini, 2007; Beltrão, 2007; Fonseca & Lindemann, 2007, as well as in dissertations (Rigitano, 2004; Munhoz, 2005; Brambilla, 2005c; Holanda, 2007; Träsel, 2007).

In most of the articles the exploratory character predominates and a great effort is made to conduct a conceptual search. It can be seen that “Open source journalism” has been gaining importance as a basic concept for comprehension of the phenomenon (Breier, 2004; Quadros, 2005; Brambilla, 2005c) etc. Synonyms frequently are used, such as Open Source Intelligence (OSI), Open Publication Journalism (Schwingel, 2004; Holanda, 2004) or Open Agenda Journalism (Munhoz, 2005).

The most frequent translation to Portuguese is *Jornalismo de Código Aberto* (Open Code Journalism). However, in Silva Jr. (2004) we have the designation open source journalism, seeking, in addition to the relation with software, to emphasize the role played by the subject in question in a context of the opening of publication channels for entities and groups which are usually only primary sources of journalism. Holanda (2007) also adopts this perspective, based on the arguments of Silva Jr. as well as on the definition of Open Source Intelligence presented

by Hirsh & Stalder (2002). Most researchers prefer to make explicit the fact that Opensource journalism is a species of the participative journalism genus.

Inevitable conceptual divergences have arisen. For Brambilla (2005b) *Wikinews* does not form part of open source journalism, since, according to the author, due to the lack of editorial authority, the news never goes beyond the beta version. For the opposite reason, that is to say, the maintenance of editorial authority in *Ohmynews*, Holanda (2007) does not consider it to be an open source vehicle, accepting the wiki model as an extreme, albeit valid case. Marcelo Träsel (2007) prefers use a definition of participative webjournalism, which encapsulates both varieties (editorial and non-editorial), giving more importance to the strictly communicative aspects of participation.

There are constant mentions of instrumental concepts like those presented in the influential work of Anita Chan (2002), which frequently utilizes definitions such as collaborative publication or collaborative news network (Schwingel, 2004), (Beltrão, 2007), (Holanda, 2007). Another constant presence (Fonseca & Lindemann, 2007), (Holanda, 2007) and (Träsel, 2007) as operator of the analyses performed is the concept of gatewatching, as developed by Axel Bruns (2005).

Paulo Munhoz (2005) directs his investigation to the role played by photography in participative journalism. This involves an effort at charting which, through bibliographic research and case studies, identifies “new formal aspects of photojournalism in the era of the networks” (Munhoz, 2005, p. 18). For Ana Maria Bambrilla (2005a), the focus of interest is the journalist’s role with respect to this new participating public. She has resource to bibliographic research, to participating observation and interviews with citizen-reporters of *Ohmynews* from different countries chosen at random, with researchers on the matter and with members of the Korean newspaper’s newsroom. Bambrilla is not interested in content analysis, but rather in the interaction between journalists and the public and its rules. For this purpose, she made a description of the site’s structure, of the procedures involved in the interaction of the user with the site. By not taking into consideration the content produced by this symbiotic relation between journalists and

the public, Bambrilla limited her research to revealing the problem only by means of the subjects involved in open source journalism. However, she failed to take into consideration what was said in the subject's messages.

André Holanda (2007) observes the relation of open source journalism with the public by means of case studies: *Indymedia*, *CMI*, *Slashdot*, *AgoraVox*, *Wikinotícias*, and *Wikinews*. Content analysis is adopted to accompany the news on the sites, recording all the issuers, topics, origin, sources of the information published, graphic interfaces and structuring of the editing tasks with the intention of ascertaining the powers and limits which the public possesses in the interaction with the teams that maintain the sites. Marcelo Träsel (2007) utilizes content analysis seeking to establish up to what point do the public's contributions and interventions expand the journalistic aspects of the articles published in *Wikinews* and *KuroShin*, creating a really multi-perspective journalism, as established by Gans, apud (Bruns, 2005). The data was collected during seven days in seven alternating weeks, totaling ten articles valid as initial texts and interventions related to them. The author considers as "initial text" the first version of a story published in *Wikinews*, on which the collaborators will work directly, as well as the proposed story sent to the editing waiting line in *KuroShin*, to which suggestions for changes and opinions about the events narrated will be added.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that one of the main difficulties in mapping out methodological trends in the work produced by Brazilian academics on participative journalism is a lack of explicit methodological indications in many of them. The list presented in this article is certainly incomplete and tentative but it can be taken as a representative sample of Brazilian production on the subject and – we hope – as a starting point for an expanded and more comprehensive charting .

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In this book, the field of information and communication is defined as a combination of technologies, structures and processes, products and services, which link people to the world, opening avenues of expression and consumption, with information, communication, and telecommunications. The appropriation of these new instruments and services is a cardinal point for opening the concrete development of the information society.

Given its significance for the everyday life of people, social groups, companies, governments and all kinds of organizations, this universe of technology demands public development, policies, regulations, planning, prioritization, guided investment and actions, which assure its functioning in a coordinated and efficient way.

As expressed on its title, the book's purpose is to analyze the pursuing of the information society in Brazil through the analysis of specific cases. It is intended to focus in two primary areas: Policy – in which information and telecommunication policies at the national and local level are analyzed; and Digital Content and Online Journalism – in which Internet's impact on journalism practices is accessed.

Besides providing important benchmarks for policy makers the book will be very useful for Communication and Information researchers, students and teachers.

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