



Indians on the Network: Notes about Brazilian Indigenous Cyberactivism

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Information and communication technologies form the bases for contexts that are increasingly global, and through which the expression of differences is found in the informational environment and the visibility of its own cultural dynamism. That is, the interactions between digital informative interfaces and architectures and the exchanges between distinct cultural universes, which transcend geographical boundaries, stimulate the emergence of new and recognized ethnic identities.

In the case of indigenous identities, cyberspace is providing a significant informational environment for the actuation of the native people of Brazil and of the world, for which the conflict and the affirmation of their cultural specifics require communicative actions on the Internet. These experiences are not framed by the interpretations motivated by that negative perception of the use of this network proceeding from the same analyses that so many assimilate and reproduce as the stereotypic image of the Indian by the white man's world.¹

The expanding use of the Internet among this group and their appropriation, interaction, and production of content—through blogs, websites, and portals—derives from its own indigenous cultural dynamism, putting at risk those interpretative schemes that insist on the categorization of stereotypes. As a result of this interaction with the informational architectures of cyberspace, there is a break with a stereotypical view of a static "indigenous substance." More than a demand on the part of these people, their interaction with digital communication technologies has become an important communicative action that they are incorporating into interethnic politics.

In view of this, the objective of this article is to reflect on the characteristics and the significance of this indigenous action in cyberspace, taking into consideration the data produced through exploratory research, and pioneered in Brazil, titled "Cyborgs—the native presence in cyberspace." In this study,

¹ In Brazil, the term "Indian," which was a colonial invention, was later appropriated by indigenous politics in interethnic contexts. However, the indigenous people utilize this ethnic term for self-attribution, referring to their specific identity (e.g., they adopt ethnonyms of a group, for example, Ashaninka, Paiter, and so on), while the generic term "Indian" is also widely used by anthropologists and scholars in the political arena for the revindication of the rights of these people.

which was undertaken between 2005 and 2010, we proposed the metaphor of the cyborg, understanding this expression to mean a new contemporary native condition intersecting with communicative flows and in symbiosis with software and hardware (Pereira, 2008, 2012).

In specifically investigating Brazilian indigenous cyberactivism, we have divided this article into five parts. In the first part, as a theoretical frame for analysis, the specifics of the Internet and of cyberspace are discussed; in the second, we address the emergence of cyberactivism within the Mexican Zapatista uprising. The third part points out the methodological approaches we used, and the fourth presents data and analysis of Brazilian indigenous cyberactivism. The fifth part gives the final considerations of this study.

The Internet as Informational Space for Indigenous (inter)Action

Since the emergence of the Internet among the public at large, through commercial providers, the Internet has acquired new significance in terms of the collaboration of its users/producers, whether by individual creative appropriation or by the collaboration of people, groups, and communities. This digital communicative informational space, gifted with plasticity by virtue of the digitalization of its data and its decentralized communication, offers multiple connections and possibilities for the production of content and for interaction.

The permeable interactivity of this world network makes cyberspace, besides being a communication space (Lévy, 1997) that is mediated through computers, into a continual transformational experience, in which humans, information, physical computer components, and programs are symbiotically integrated. The result is that it is an important producer of the imaginary and a singular ecosystem capable of integrating technical and social elements, which the sociologist Massimo Di Felice (2005) characterized as "experiential forms of techno-communicative dislocations . . . [which] create and multiply spaces and electronic material elements socially active" and which thus makes possible "a new lexicon capable of relating the social experiences which are created from the forms of overcoming the boundaries between the organic and inorganic" (p. 17).

This techno-social ecosystem, which is a unifier of organic and inorganic elements that are powered by cyberspace, establishes a "continuity" between the physical and the mental, a new space situated between two worlds, the mental and the real: "cyberspace reveals a new space for the complexity of life on earth, a new refuge for a kingdom which is 'between' the two worlds. Cyberspace becomes a new site for its own conscience" (De Kerckhove, 2010, pp. 154–155).

This is a new site of consciousness that is entangled with the experience of virtualization, which the philosopher Pierre Lévy (1995) articulates as notions of "reality," "possibility," "actuality," and "virtuality." The virtual does not oppose the real, according to Lévy. Rather, the virtual exists, and its fecund and powerful manner puts in play processes of creation that "perforate wells of feelings under the immediate physical presence" (Lévy, 1995, p. 12). Thus, there is, in these processes, a complementarity between real and virtual, in which the latter configures itself as the execution of the real as a potential and as one of the main vectors of the creation of reality itself.

This dynamic condition of cyberspace, which is attributed to the symbiosis between the real world and the mental world, between virtual and real, between humans, information, and machines, is inspired by the notion of "rhizome," which was proposed by the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980). Based on a botanical precedent, the rhizome metaphor references the role of the underground stem of a plant, which is between the root (monocot root) and is constantly growing, traversing different subterranean points. Its connections lead us to the idea of that which is intermediary, in circulation, without beginning or end, where it grows and overflows. In this operation, Deleuze and Guattari established some functional principles of the rhizome that resemble the characteristics of cyberspace: connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, rupture, cartography.

For the sociologist Manuel Castells (2000), the informational characteristics in a "network" favor the appearance of identities, given that the information society "is structured in bipolar opposition to Network and Being" (Castells, 2000, p. 22). The Being is considered in the affirmation of the identity of subjects or of their collectives. The great power of identity expresses itself in the attempt to find alternatives to the system by means of social movements that are articulated in terms of specific identities, that is, in the formation of groups centered on themselves, and in the auto-affirmation of defined values as a form of protection in front of a system that excludes them. This appearance of identities refers to the complexity of the globalization process, as pointed out by Néstor García Canclini (1999) in his processes of glocalization, from the local and from the global emergence of interculturality and cultural diversity.

Therefore, in cyberspace, a multiplicity of viewpoints is manifested, provided by the diffusion of the communicative apparatus, which leads the subjects and indigenous groups to participate in the national public space. The organizations and indigenous people act and re-elaborate discussions about themselves as users and producers of the informational content. This action evokes a native contemporary condition, a *cyborg*, making use of hardware and software, informational systems, and communication flows.

It is in this sense that we understand indigenous cyberactivism as a conjunction of communicative actions² in the world network, as technical and social actions realized by the native people, in which an ethnic indigenous identification refers to cultural specificities (symbolic and material) and political claims.

Zapatism and the Emergence of Cyberactivism

If the new communicative technologies, in the form of the Internet, have their origins in the United States, having derived from military and academic communications strategies, cyberactivism, as a communicative action realized through this network, has as its origin the Zapatista movement in the south

² "Communicative actions" does not here have the same sense as that elaborated by J. Habermas (1987). The German philosopher understood communicative action as a form of social action in ideal term—guided by communicative reasons—which involves its participants in conditions of equality to express or produce their opinions.

of Mexico. Even though the indigenous Brazilian cyberactivism arose later and has specific characteristics, it is important to mention this indigenous movement, both Mexican and global, in the historical context of the importance of communication for contemporary native action. A local uprising was transformed into a movement with transnational repercussions, which was inaugurated through communications realized through digital network circuits.

The Zapatista National Liberation Army (ZNLA; Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional [EZLN]) was formed by ethnic groups of Mayan origin (Tzotziles, Tzeltales, Choles, Tojolabales, Mames, and Zoques) that publicly arose against the North American Free Trade Agreement on January 1, 1994. Women and men, hooded and armed, showed to the public the *Ya basta!*, a rallying cry against the precarious economic and social situation suffered by the indigenous populations of the country. The first ZNLA declaration reflected precisely what was being denied to these populations: "democracy, liberty and justice." The demands were not exclusively indigenous, but many Mexicans were denied participation in the decision-making of representative democracy, in a process marked by corruption and patronage.

The use of the Internet to spread communication (which was often poetic) in order to make declarations and denounce the abuses committed by the Mexican army against the communities of the Lacandon Jungle reverberated within the innovative Zapatista mobilization. Such action did not have the struggle for power as its objective, but instead it constituted a harsh criticism of the Mexican representative political system, based on an innovative means of communication.

Beginning with the insurgence in 1994 and the National Consultation for Peace,³ which occurred in the following year, the conflict in the region was relocated to Internet connections and became extraordinarily amplified on an international level: "*We are all Marcos!*" was the cry of the Mexican demonstrators. The "I Intergalactic Encounter for Humanity and against Neo-liberalism," organized by the Zapatistas in the Lacandon Jungle in July 1996, united more than 5,000 people from 42 countries and became a landmark in the "global fight" of the new social movements. From the beginning, it was associated with cyberactivism. From that point on, a new cycle of contemporary social movements began, that is, diverse global mobilizations, antiglobal protests, and criticism of neoliberalism that took place at Group of 8 meetings, at meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, and of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in Seattle (1997) and in Genoa (1998).

The utilization of the Internet permitted the Zapatistas to disseminate their communications and complaints to the world, creating a network of support groups that were mobilized from an international public that was capable of impeding the Mexican government from using repression on a large scale and

³ The National Consultation for Peace was realized through polls, with six questions concerning the demands of the Mexican people, such as, for example, whether the ZNLA should form a new political force or unite with others. This questionnaire reached 1.3 million people, from Mexico and throughout the world, through various forms, including the Internet. From this questionnaire came the National Zapatista Liberation Front (NZLP), a "nonarmed arm" of the ZNLA, which established a presence in various cities of the world, including Brazil.

forcing it to negotiate with the Zapatistas. That is, the Zapatistas used the Internet⁴ in an innovative way, employing sophisticated language based on the poetic words of Sub-Commandant Marcos, in order to create broad networks of solidarity (Yúdice, 2000). The Zapatistas movement is an example that there is a change in the way the social conflict was communicated, a shift that did not instrumentalize the media, but presented them as the actuation space for the symbolic in the social informational context (Castells, 2000).

This Zapatista communication transferred the conflict to the digital environment, transforming it into a conflict with a "transnational" character that was open to dialogue with the national and international community. The "without faces" started to become visible in their diversity.

Brazilian Indigenous Cyberactivism

There are many differences between the Zapatista cyberactivism and that of the Brazilian indigenous people. Here we do not want to establish comparisons, since the contrasts are large and not within the scope of this article. What is important is that the Brazilian indigenous cyberactivism is in the process of developing and does not have the dimension of a global social movement, as does that of the Zapatista. The Brazilian movement is associated with characteristics of the Brazilian indigenous peoples and their place within the national society.

The Brazilian indigenous population consists of more than 230 peoples with 180 languages, according to the 2010 IBGE⁵ Census, totaling 896,917 people, or 0.47% of the total population of the country. Of these, 324,834 live in cities and 572,083 in rural areas. The large majority of the indigenous communities live on collective lands, demarcated by the Brazilian government for their exclusive use. The so-called Indigenous Territories (*Terras Indígenas* in Brazilian Portuguese) today total 687 (Instituto Socioambiental, 2011). There are no actual systematic data about this population's access to the Internet. The first data were presented, in 2001, by the Center for Social Politics of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (Neri, 2003), which identified an index of 3.72% for digital access of the indigenous populations from a total of 12.46% of the Brazilian population that has access to a computer, and 8.31% that has access to the Internet (data from the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios; PNAD, National Research for Sample of Domiciles, for the year 2001, and from the Demographic Census 2000, IBGE). Such an index is not detailed. It is more than 10 years old, and reflects a lack of data and estimates about the digital participation of the indigenous populations, but indicates a very small rate of indigenous users in the total universe of the rest of the country.

Even in light of significant experiences of indigenous participation in the digital network, it is a fact that digital inclusion is still an enormous challenge. This stems, principally, from the difficulty in

⁴ On the site organized by Justin Paulson, which is recognized by the ZNLA: <http://www.ezln.org.mx>, are available all the communications and declarations, and a Zapatista radio station.

⁵ *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE)—the *Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics*, or IBGE, is the agency responsible for statistical, geographic, cartographic, geodetic, and environmental information in Brazil.

installing and maintaining equipment and in training people in the villages. Although recent years have been marked by nongovernmental and governmental initiatives, such as the Brazilian government program "Points of Indigenous Culture,"⁶ which was implemented by the Ministry of Culture, the indigenous demand for digital inclusion is larger than the coverage offered.

Besides presenting the possibility of affirming indigenous cultural dynamics in a way that promotes the visibility of these peoples' ethnic identities, this indigenous demand for digital inclusion also comes from the perception that the construction of new communicative strategies may help in applying pressure for the resolution of historical problems, such as the guarantee of the right to land.

In this way, the conflicts related to the demarcation of and protection against the invasion of indigenous lands equally involve indigenous and nonindigenous mobilization in these digital informational environments. We can consider, for example, the Suruí people of the Indigenous Territories Seventh of September, who are situated on the border between the states of Rondônia and Acre. Using Google Earth to map their territories and to protect them from deforestation, through a partnership with Google Outreach, which is the social arm of Google, the Suruí photographed and registered the actions of the deforestation of their lands, providing this information on the Internet and in this way, triggering many governmental and nongovernmental institutions to take action.

This example demonstrates that once again, these indigenous local actions in informational environments contradict the ideal of the Indian who is relegated to Nature's pull, a symbol of purity in opposition to any type of interaction with technological objects. There is in these interactions the possibility of the affirmation and re-elaboration of the indigenous ethnic identity that has spread beyond the use of the Internet and begun to arouse some interest among Brazilian academics.

Methodological Proceedings

Since the appearance more than 15 years ago of Internet access providers in the country, indigenous action on this network has become significant, not only in the amount of people using it, but also because it corresponds to a novelty in the cultural dynamics of this population. Since 2000, the year in which the first site was registered, various of these peoples⁷, who self-identify as Terena, Guarani, and

⁶ In 2006, the Ministry of Culture, in partnership with the Ministry of Telecommunications and the Ministry of Employment and Income, launched the "Points of Culture" within the *GESAC* program of the federal government to improve the availability of computers connected to the Internet in the villages. In the last two years, various sites have come to be called "Points of Indigenous Culture," with approximately 150 already installed throughout the country.

⁷ The sites of subjects and groups pertaining to the following indigenous people were mapped: Ashaninka, Atikum, Fulni-ô, Galibi, Galibi-Marworno, Guajajara, Guarani Mbyá, Guarani Nãndevá, Kaingang, Kamayura, Karipuna, Kariri-Xocó, Kaxinawá, Kaxixó, Kiriri, Korubo, Krenak, Kuikuro, Maxacali, Maytapu, Munduruku, Murá, Palikur, Pankararé, Pankararu, Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe, Potiguara, Suruí, Tapeba, Tapuya, Terena, Ticuna, Truká, Tumbalalá, Tupinambá, Xakriabá, Xavante, Xucuru-Kariri, Xukuru.

Xavantes, among 36 other ethnic groups, have come to be in cyberspace by means of some site, blog, or portal, or enrolled in a social network relationship (principally, Orkut e Facebook).

After discussing the realization of the mapping of 50 self-identified indigenous sites that took place between 2005 and 2009, and included blogs and a portal called the Online Indians Network (Rede Índios Online, <http://www.indiosonline.org.br>), followed by an analysis of their hypertextual narratives in their repertoire of meanings,⁸ we identify the indigenous communicative action that comes about through the actuation of indigenous organizations, be they national, regional, or local (institutional cyberactivism), and through the emergence of indigenous writers, who have their own sites and personal blogs (cyberactivism of indigenous subjects). We then briefly present their characteristics and significance.

Cyberactivism of Indigenous Organizations: Institutional Cyberactivism

Of all the indigenous Brazilian sites that we mapped and analyzed, 62% are of indigenous organizations, of which 14% are national sites, 20% regional sites, and 28% local sites, this last being principally composed of associations derived from villages. This characteristic of Brazilian indigenous action in cyberspace demonstrates the institutional aspect of the actuation and interaction with the and an understanding of this means of communication on the part of these organizations, which are associated with the fight for rights, and therefore, a space for political claims and ethnic visibility before the national and international society.

Furthermore, many of these organizations emerged through cyberspace. The Internet reveals itself, then, not as an instrument of indigenous organizations, but in contrast, as an informational environment that induces indigenous action on the network, given its reticular aspect, which is ubiquitous and interactive. It is in the dynamics of communication on the network that indigenous organizations revitalize their political demands.

However, the proper Zapata movement (although it is not a genuine indigenous organization) is different from the traditional Latin American indigenous organizations,⁹ with their emphasis on the Mexicans, which have been present in these informational contexts for a longer time, and through which

⁸ This refers to interpretative activity of attributing sense starting from the relationships with other texts, images, sounds, and so forth, or hypertexts, and how these significances relate to each other in a network of association and dissociation of senses (Lévy, 1990, pp. 72–73).

⁹ The indigenous organizations in Latin America have a long institutional tradition, becoming in some countries a national political force that carries weight in the form of political representation. See the case of the elected Bolivian president Evo Morales, who belonged to the Movement for Socialism (MAS), which is linked to the Revolutionary Movement for Liberation Tupaj Katari and the indigenous-peasant party Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the People (IPSP). Indigenous political participation and its subsequent organization in the form of political movements are owed to the fact that in many countries the indigenous population has a peasant origin and is the majority. Because this population's workforce is linked to the local economy, many of these indigenous groups are organized in trade unions, constituting a social class.

they have launched more diverse strategies. The indigenous Brazilian organizations are gradually returning to occupy these environments, a process that is also simultaneous with the dissemination of indigenous intercultural education and with the use of the Internet as a tool for their own institutional visibility.

The potentialities of cyberspace for the promotion of indigenous protagonism create challenges for these Brazilian organizations. If the fight that is central to the Indians' demands—the "land" as a place for cultural survival—no longer passes through the traditional political space but instead through the informational environment, it is because through the Internet is revealed the more diverse dynamics that are intrinsic to the communicative sense of action and conflict. In order to take up this challenge, the indigenous organizations, principally those that are national and regional, are gradually seeking to professionalize themselves, introducing in their organizations a structure focused on information management (with the formation of a communication team that can, for example, actualize the site and produce specific content) in accordance with the informational context of actual political fights.

This context seems to validate the significance of digital communication that is integrated with indigenous action and its ethnic and identity performance as an effective means for its survival, not only symbolically but also physically. To be able to initiate contacts and support networks in Brazil and throughout the world, to travel within the world of the nonindigenous, and to affirm indigenous ethnic cultural diversity empowers them to reestablish a new dynamics for interethnic politics.

Indigenous Cyberactivism of National Organizations

Indigenous cyberactivism, as realized by national organizations, is presented in sites that belong to institutions that do not have a local or regional character in their actions. Some do not possess a physical site (Rede Grumin, Núcleo de Escritores e Artistas Indígenas, and so forth), which indicates that cyberspace is a means by which these peoples can interact with national and international society and among themselves.

Moreover, the centrality of communication for indigenous organizations reflects the need for them to be present on the Internet in the form of a site, even though it may not be updated regularly.

On these sites, the "generic Indian" is presented, and he is rehabilitated for a communicative action that is focused on ethnic affirmation. These are metacommunicative sites, presented as communicative languages which talk about the indigenous communication (written, audiovisual, and so forth). We can detect here the matrices of the tendency of indigenous action to return each time to more digital communicative action, uniting the different mediatic languages. It is in this symbolic digital space that their fights against these institutions take on new tones.

Indigenous Cyberactivism of Regional Organizations

This modality of indigenous cyberactivism is exercised by associations or organizations of indigenous groups regionally located in Brazil, or by an ecosystem, as in the Amazon case of the

Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazônica (COICA). Territoriality is a reference point of the organizations on these sites, but it also informs us of the professional category that emerges from ethnic collectives—of the indigenous professors, for example, the Organização Geral dos Professores Ticunas Bilíngües (OGPTB, <http://www.ogptb.org.br>) and the Organização dos Professores Indígenas Mura (OPIM, <http://www.opim.com.br/opim.html>); and of gender, for example, the Organização de Mulheres Indígenas do Acre (Organization of Indigenous Women of Acre, <http://www.sitoakore.blogspot.com>), the only blog in this category.

The sites of these regional organizations that are found in cyberspace reflect an identification that is ethnic, professional, or related to gender, and in these interactive environments is found the interlocutory space of a communicative indigenous action that is centered on the construction of new collective native actions. Some ethnic groups unite to perform actions on the network. For example, the group Portal of Indians Online, formed by ethnic groups of the Brazilian northeast, seek communication with their “parents” (a native term to denote another indigene, independent of ethnic group), the registry of their history, and finally, the mobilization of resources through local development projects for regional villages. In a general way, the efficacy of this communicative action seems to be supported less in their information architecture and more in an aesthetic and semantic field of images and codes of ethnicity that are constructed by these collectives.

Indigenous Cyberactivism of Local Associations

Formed by local associations, mostly from the villages, this type of cyberactivism points to the local effort of an interethnic politic. These are cultural associations that seek to realize a direct contact, by means of informational architectures, with the objective of expressing the local culture and obtaining support, whether it be through an invitation for a visit to a village or in the form of support for projects for the community. The conflict that these groups face is also revealed in these sites, as seen, for example, on the blog of the Sanctuary of Pajés (<http://www.santuariodospajes.blogspot.com>), which is a group of Indians of various ethnicities that has occupied a savanna region inside the Brazilian capital for more than 30 years, and from which they are threatened by expulsion because of the real estate interests in that region.

These local sites reveal the recent transformations that have taken place in the social structure of the villages. When such associations are formed, their “president” or “director” does not always correspond to the traditional leadership of the village, but instead some member who has writing skills and knows the dominant language (Brazilian Portuguese) becomes a cultural mediator. Thus emerge new social roles that are highly valued in the interior of the indigenous politics. Besides the caciques,¹⁰ or

¹⁰ The term “cacique” denotes “chief,” or indigenous “leadership,” and it originated from pre-Columbian people. The term became generic to refer to the social status of the local power. Over the years, it acquired a negative connotation to denote the arbitrary influence of these leaders—the caciques—over the local communities, a meaning that emerged from colonial politics. But there also exist innumerable native terms that are close to the attribute of “leadership” that is given to the community by its “chief.” Even though we know these differences and the problem associated with the term, we have opted to use it in

shamans, there are now the teachers, the videomakers, and the indigenous writers, who are all starting from their past experience with communication technologies (principally written and video) and are now acting in cyberspace. That is to say, a new group of subjects has emerged, the majority of them formed by the youth, who are identified by their communicative actuation within and outside the village.

Therefore, through access to the Internet in the villages and the production of content by these communities, new forms of prestige have appeared and also been actuated in the internal political dynamics of these communities, which seek to engage in an intercultural dialogue where their own survival is at play.

Cyberactivism of Indigenous Subjects

Based on the native presence of indigenous subjects who identify themselves in cyberspace, we can identify precisely 13 sites of indigenous women and men. In locating these individual experiences on the network, we presuppose, then, an understanding of the dimension of *subject*. This category as an indigenous collective reveals itself as problematic, since it has no similarity to that produced by the West¹¹.

But, then, what subject is this that we are talking about, that qualifies cyberactivism of *indigenous subjects* through "personal" sites (authorial)? From the notion of "person" offered by Marcel Mauss (1974), corresponding to the word in its constructed historical sense, we identify in the authorial sites the subjects in the plural, also as ethnic subjects¹² (Cardoso de Oliveira, 2006). They are the enunciators of a dynamic ethnic identity. Therefore, they are performers of Indian attributes as established by their positions (Hall, 2003), which in the digital context favors the appearance, as well as the transit, of the subjective dislocations and the relations of these subjects with others, be they indigenous or nonindigenous.

However, the hypertextual narratives set out by these subjects are expressed as an "I" in "community," referential of an ethnic auto-conscience, attributed in contrast (from the strangeness and the recognition of self before the "other"—nonindigenous). In personal sites, in many cases, these subjects take the collective word, that is, the "we" of an ethnic identity or the generic term "Indian," to qualify their discourse, imputing to the Indian the authority before his community to his reader/browser.

order to better communicate to the reader about these local leaders, who for some reason gain prestige in these societies.

¹¹ Here we refer to the conception of the original subject of the Enlightenment, which designates the rational subject, cohesive and universal; and we also refer to its criticism, as produced by the post-structuralist and feminist movements (Hall, 1998).

¹² Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (2006) refers to the *ethnic subject*, the "full historical subject," in terms of the self-consciousness that these subjects produce in themselves, which here we understand as that process of subjectivity and constitution of these *ethnic subjects* that also takes place in the use of the present word in their digital narratives, as well as the digital informational architectures (blogs, sites, portals, and so on).

In order to understand here the sense employed in “subjects” that are positioned in their contexts (oral or techno-social), we should ask another question that better clarifies this new indigenous actuation: *who are these subjects?* This “new” character arises in the contemporary indigenous situation: in the first place, for intercultural educational growth and access to higher education, which leads to the acquisition of writing skills and the valorization of an ethnic consciousness; in the second place, for the importance of communication, which affects the growing indigenous participation in cyberspace and other mediatic modalities (audiovisual, radio, and literature). Derived from these contexts that have been discussed in recent years, principally by metropolitan indigenous subjects (who live in, are born in, or have contact with urban centers), we find in cyberspace the writers Eliane Potiguara (<http://www.elianePotiguara.org.br>), Olívio Jekupé (<http://oliviojekupe.blogspot.com>), and Daniel Munduruku; the lawyer Danilo Luiz (<http://daniloluiz.blog-br.com>); the artist Roman Ketchua (<http://abiayala.vilabol.uol.com.br/index.html>); the anthropologist and professor Florêncio Vaz (<http://florenciovaz.blog.uol.com.br>); the broadcaster and cultural producer Naine Terena (<http://fabrica9.spaceblog.com.br>); the shaman Txaná Uri (<http://txanauri.blogspot.com>); the indigenous students Leopardo Yawa (<http://www.renarg.org/kaxinawa>) and Aricema Pataxó (<http://reservapataxojaqueira.blogspot.com>); and the indigenous activist Marcos Terena.

The way in which these subjects realize their activism in cyberspace manifests itself predominately through blogs, in which they rearticulate an ethnic discourse in favor of indigenous thinking, making the Internet into an informational digital environment for articulation through networks for contact and support and for the dissemination of news about indigenous peoples.

Although we can perceive that in many cases these sites and blogs are not updated, we consider that these registered informational architectures are valid and significant for our understanding of the forms of actuation of these subjects, who transform themselves, effectively, into cultural mediators between the indigenous world and the “white man’s world,” between the channels and vehicles of traditional information,¹³ and between governmental institutions. Some people already publish in their blogs journalistic reports related to the indigenous question and documents of these people related to demonstrations and protests. We thus have here a force for translating the indigenous world, realized principally by these writers who are city inhabitants and articulators who re-elaborate the wisdom of their tradition. Many times their efforts result in a creative and hybrid composition of significances, of references, and of hypertextual structures, which stimulate new indigenous cultural significances.

¹³ Newspaper articles are still recognized as a “trustworthy” and “prestigious source.” For example, to have an interview published in a paper with large circulation in Brazil is, for them, a means to obtain prestige. An interview of an indigenous writer published in a periodical gives him or her greater visibility. When some material of that type appears, it is soon digitally reproduced by some indigenous blog. The personal sites make great use of this type of reproduction of journalistic materials, mainly related to topics that come from newspapers of indigenous institutions.

Final Considerations

Having discussed this pioneering exploratory study in Brazil, we seek briefly to present the principle characteristics and significant features of Brazilian indigenous cyberactivism.

The indigenous presence in cyberspace, through sites, blogs, and portals, offers an index of a new type of Indian protagonism, in which the interaction with digital communication permits the development of original actuation strategies: denunciations of indigenous rights, articulation of the support between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples, the right to free speech and access to knowledge. This phenomenon highlights that this type of actuation through digital communication represents forms of exchange and significance that rupture, at least partially, with the hegemonic representational systems: of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), of state institutions responsible for the assistance to these peoples, and of academia, composed by ethnographic authority, produced by anthropologists.

Thus, the interaction between these subjects and their collectives with the informational architectures allows the expression of diversity and difference. Such actuation promotes some specifics of this cyberactivism. The indigenous social actors who are digitally connected are bilingual¹⁴ or already possess an indigenous language, have had access to basic schooling, and obviously, are familiar with some network resources and their actuation mechanisms.

There are few who have an excellent grasp of the basic techniques associated with programming for the construction of a site. A good many use the free resources available on the network, and others, principally the indigenous organizations, pay for these services (domain registration). Although there is a predominance of proprietary software, experiences with free software point to sophisticated forms of informational architecture that aggregate more interactive and collaborative environments, such as the portal of the Online Indian Network (Rede Índios Online) and Indigenous Web Brazil.

Finally, this indigenous Brazilian cyberactivism interacts with this ubiquitous informational environment—a promoter of cultural diversity and of the phenomenon of interculturality—making it into a space for the performance of that which for them means “to be an Indian,” where Indianness is constantly being redefined by the language and by the hypertextual network plots.

¹⁴ Eighty-eight percent of the sites mapped are only available in Brazilian Portuguese.

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