Links *in the* Chain

digital natives

Of Special Interest

Toy Story 3 is being nominated for best picture, proving that sometimes the 3rd installement of a trilogy can as good as the previous two. The 3rd workshop in the "Digital Natives with a Cause?" project will take place from February 8 to the 10

The journal *Policy Futures in Education* **is having a special issue titled "Universities as knowledge institutions in the networked age" and its calling for paper submissions. One of the possible topics of submission is How Digital Natives chage the character of learning institutions. More information here: http://tinyurl.com/4vtoz5y**

This a picture of a cute monkey, courtesy of http://www.monkey-pictures.net

Dear Digital (alter)native,

I have been wondering these last few days, what it means to connect to somebody. Does it mean that we share a signal, or a voice, or an idea, or a feeling? Does it mean that we can, if we extend our digital selves, touch each other in intangible forms which have very physical consequences? Are our friends on Facebook, people we connect with? When I tweet and throw out 140 characters in the world, am I reaching out, beyond time-zones and lifestyles, to join hands with faceless strangers who have nothing in common with me except that we are birds of a feather who tweet together?

These are questions that have been at the centre of much debate around digital activism, youth and media. The world is very clearly divided when it comes to the idea of digital activism – there are those who swear by it, believing that the power of the click can change the world, and then there are those who swear at it, convinced that no good can come of people hiding behind a screen and clicking on links to save dolphins. Those who are not convinced, point out that the connections made online remain at the interface level, never translating into anything more durable, deep or affective. They suggest that most of the interventions that happen through viral modes of networking, are insubstantial and gimmicky, not able to bear the legacies of social change. The advocates of digital activism point at how, people who were unable to participate earlier in even talking about their role within the processes of change, are now able to enter into a discursive space that is the first step towards formulation of a community.

These debates continue in zealous tones but maybe there is a mid-way that needs to be examined. We need to acknowledge that just being on Facebook, Twitter, <insert favourite social network here> is not going to lead to revolutions. Technologies themselves do not 'connect' people. There needs to be a passion, a will, a drive and perhaps an anger that serves as a catalyst for people to connect, to reach out and to produce change. And these spaces of social interaction and communication offer the models and networks that facilitate these processes. Maybe it is time to start thinking about technology as a part of our connection ecology rather than a tool that constructs it.

With this idea in mind, we continue with our theme on Connections for the Digital Natives with a Cause? newsletter. Because we believe, that we connect because we care. And we know that we can connect because of the common technologies and mediums of communication that bind us together. Consider this editorial, a reaching out to all of you who have shared ideas, exchanged stories and helped us learn and grow this network of Digital Natives in strange and exciting ways.

Connectedly Yours

Nishant

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Welcome to the 2nd issue of the 2nd Volume "connections" of *Links In the Chain*. This issue includes a portal to the future with an in depth look of Eddie Avila, future connection-master and local coordinator of the 3rd and final "Digital Natives with a Cause?" workshop. The inter-continental connections focused around Gender and technology issues continue, and Paidamoyo gives us a summary of the latest conversation. Ronald shares a lesson he learned in the last month, and Noopur continues her photo explorations. This time its focused on technology helps us capture events and conceptualize them. Hope you enjoy reading!

How Media Promotes Gender Inequality

By **Paidamoyo Muzulu**

A group of Digital Natives have been organizing and participating in online discussions centered around issues of gender and technology. On January 28th, they met last to discuss how the media promotes gender inequality. This is summary of the online discussion.

Media has been very unfriendly to women and children for a long time thriough the way it depicted them and reproduced news but this is about to change because of new media technologies.

Women have limited voices in the media and invariably the images of women we see potray them as victims, vulnerable people or simply as cheerleaders to man. A cursory look at all media will show that men are used more often as news sources, analysts and commentators. They, men, are also potrayed as successful, powerful and leaders more often than not.

The above is generally promoted because of training journalists receive and the control men has in publishing, editing and assigning people to stories in the newsroom. It is important that all media personnel should be trained on gender sensitivity and to produce gender senistive stories. Women who are successful should also be potrayed more often like men.

Women and gender sensitive men should work around campaigns targetted at media houses that are not gender sensitive and continue to reproduce stories and articles that engenders gender stereotypes.

However, it is good to note that, new media technology have shifted the way media operates. Anyone, anywhere can post news on blogs, internet and share information using computers and other hand held digital appliances like mobile phones. This can make sure women can produce and consume news.

Gender-Neutral Toilets in Sweden

The above can only become a reality if women are empowered so that they can access these technologies and trained in using them more effectively and effeciently. That is the challenge to jour generation to take the fight of equality to the next level.

Digital Natives have the challenge and can make the difference.

Join us in the next discussion on Literature and Cinema as agents that promote Gender Inequality and how we can change them.

Word *Around Town*

The gender and technology conversations continue, the next scheduled talk will take place February 11 at 14:30 GMT and the topic will be the portrayal of women and female characters in literature and films in the 20th and 21st century. Get in touch with Paidamoyo for more information.

Editor and writer Shweta Taneja joins the Digital Native community. She will be working with digital natives on the production of two books after the Latin American workshop in Chile. More information about Shweta can be found at http://staneja.com/

Taipei community members come together and share resources about ICT4D organizations in Asia after Nighat made a call for support. Some of the resources shared were http://tinyurl.com/69eoc52 an UNESCO-compiled list of organizations and projects in India and http://tinyurl.com/4qbeuyz, a wiki page on ICT4D in Asia.

Eddie Avila is a Bolivian-American who maintains the blog Barrio Flores, while living in Cochabamba, Bolivia. He is the Regional Editor for Latin America and the Spanish language editor for Global Voices. Eduardo is also the founder and director of the Voces Bolivianas project, which teaches the use of citizen media to underrepresented groups throughout Bolivia, with the help of a network of national bloggers. He will be organizing the 3rd Digital Natives with a Cause workshop in Santiago Feb 7th-10th.

Word
Around Town

Nonku asks the community if there are differences on molie phone usage between rural and urban users. A sample of responses from India, Nigeria and Kenya courtesy of Ajay, Nilo, Rotimi and Simeon makes for an interesting though flow.

Reporting from the India Art Summit, Noopur presents an itneresting question about art and the making of art: Is the process of observing art part of the concept of art? is the making of art art itself?

Nilofar ventures into the semiotic and ontological conditions of a digital wall. Joseph G and Nishant present their views on what a wall is and what it represents.

DN in focus: Eduardo Avila

What changes do you see digital technology inflicting into civic society in Latin America?

There is a small, yet growing number of internet users who are eager to see what else can be done using digital technologies. The advantage that some users in some countries have is that they can see what their neighbors and other communities around the world have done using these tools. They can learn from their successes, but also the challenges, and apply them to their own unique contexts. However, there are many more examples of communities that are implementing their own unique solutions for challenges facing their society.

How do you think this coming workshop will affect our current understanding of Latin Americans and their use of technology?

The workshop will bring together a good cross-section of users of digital technologies in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to share experiences and learn about their motivation. Even though the internet makes the region such a smaller place in terms of ease of connectivity and relation-building, these forms of communication can never replace face-to-face interaction. Even though the workshop is not about skill-building, the participants will most likely come away with ideas that will either reaffirm or challenge what they have been accomplishing back home in their own communities.

Do you consider yourself a digital native? why or why not?

I guess that it depends on one's definition of a digital native. I do know that the way that I currently access information, interact with colleagues, and am able to work regardless of geographic boundaries does depend entirely on digital technologies. It's pretty exciting to see what new technologies are right around the corner, but I think at some point I will want to step back and go back to working the old-fashioned way and less dependent on my laptop.

What do you think the social/political connections of technology will evolve to look like in 5 years? in 15 years?

A lot that depends on how quickly rural communities and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds can gain regular access to the internet. In many countries in the region, internet access is still a privilege enjoyed by the middle and upper classes. Only by leveling the playing field in terms of access will online participation be representative of these societies as a whole.

Technology? Or the people?

By **Ronald Kasendwa**

On a number of occasions we as digital natives tend to think that having technology can help us solve almost all our problems. We usually forget that technology needs to have an interface to society to cause the positive change that we are looking for. Have you ever watched a video and at the end of it all you say "wow that was beautiful!" but stayed the way you were before watching it in terms of attitude towards the issue in question?

A few years ago, I would waste a lot of my time trying to make flashy videos and websites – intended to showcase my technical skills. But all the times I exhibited my works, I never received the feedback I always expected – instead of people reviewing my works in terms of the messages the video or website was trying to pass on, they would say stuff like "I can see you are a techie. How did you do that?" But when it came to assigning roles and contracts to people who are to create the videos and websites intended to create change, I was never included on the list. This would leave me with a number of questions and on many occasions I said "it is all political."

Two years ago, I joined Adobe Youth Voices, a program by Adobe Foundation that gives youth a platform to express their concerns on issues affecting them around their society. At the program's local level (Uganda), I spent a lot of time showing off with my technical skills in video and photo editing. However, the country coordinator of the program kept on emphasizing that "the program is not about the software - it's about the intended positive on the people though using the software and other technical tools." Of course, those words took me a lot of time to understand. But I guess, all he meant was "technology for technology's sake is not a solution to anything."

A few days ago, I have been working on a video documentary about the life of a young positive. How-ever, this video is unique from all the rest because of its message. The video doesn't call for support in terms of money and material stuff, but exposes how the attitude of the society affects the young positives. I posted

> This is a really strong video and it has really touched me so deeply. I have watched it over and over again. I do not think I can express all the lessons and what it has meant to me but I will try my best....the video leaves me in a position to take off time and reflect on my life...We always ignorantly stigmatize the young positives but they are actually the most strong hearted, courageous and they really have a lot to play in control of HIV/AIDS. They stand all the stigmatization and even after all they do not give up on they come out to give us the personal testimonies. They do all this to help and save the world. That takes a strong hearted person. – **Zaake Nathan, Artistic Director (African Section), China National Arts and Culture Company**
>
> Thank you for sharing this fascinating and moving media and congratulations to the Adobe Youth Voices program for making this video possible. It is very powerful to hear Winnie tell her story and especially to learn how she has been able to not only deal with her situation but to become a beacon of hope for other's who live everyday with serious health issues. Surely an inspiration to us all and very humbling. I will certainly share this media with colleagues in the UK. Thank you, Daniel for bringing this to our attention. It is an excellent example not only as a case study but also how the iEARN International Network inspires us to continue to seek opportunities for our students to see the world as part of our family. A place where we can make a difference — working together.
>
> – **Dr. Cheryl Morgan, Chairman, iEARN-UK**

this video on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6bPF7cPx6I) and shared the link all over the internet. Surprisingly or shockingly, it has pulled a wide audience and been appreciated by a number of people from all over the world. Do we now realize what it means to have an interface to society can create?

What lessons do we learn from all these? There's always a need for a clear connection between the technology and the tools if we are to achieve positive change.

Image Sources:

Dubbing the revolution

By **Noopur Lilly**

I recently read an essay titled: 'Information, crisis and catastrophe' by Mary Ann Doane. This photo, to me, illustrates a few things that essay talked about. Basically, in the age of media, especially what is called the 'new media', events become important not for their content, urgency, magnitude, effect and so on but rather by their temporal situation. In short, what really makes an event big or small is the way it is captured and portrayed by the media. This brings me to the title: dubbing the revolution. A revolution, in our age, is not really 'out there', it is in the act of dubbing, in the very act of capturing it through technologies such as digital cameras (instant photographs), twitter (live feeds) that one 'creates' a revolution. Of course, pessimistically speaking, immediacy and 'liveness' have gained priority over content per se - *but is this hinting to a shift in the way we make and perceive news?*

Do you have interesting pictures of digital natives and how they use "new media" to document or articulate social causes? send them to digitalnatives@cis-india.org

LOL

Rumour has it that ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Inc are releasing a new application to market late 2011 - codenamed "Moonkin 2.0", it'll be a fully interactive SP-RPG game, merging daily life elements of The Sims with the magic and creativity of World of Warcraft. What we do know for sure is that the new release will have approximately 10 fingers and 10 toes, some kind of endless burping technology, and very cute chubby cheeks.

11 hours ago · Unlike · Comment

You, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and 14 others like this.

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Release date for alpha testing is expected to be 7th August, 2011, but ▮▮▮▮▮ are resolutely refusing to guarantee any delivery date, promising instead that any testers who sign up for 'baby-sitting' the new app can simply expect good news sometime in Q3 of 2011. We're certainly interested, and will be signing up straight away - leave a comment here for any spare invites we may receive!

11 hours ago · Like