The State of Open Content in Non-Western Countries

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Introduction

Open content is an approach that aims to emulate the practice of free and open source software in other areas of digital production. Amongst the most well-known open content projects are *Wikipedia*, and MIT's *Open Courseware*. Despite these high-profile cases, the field as a whole is embryonic, particularly in non-western contexts. For the purpose of this study we have taken a narrow view of "open content", meaning non-executable information, created with the intention, if not practice, that other people might use and transform this material freely. We used the following definition:

> *Open Content is all cultural material (text, sound, images) that the general public can freely use, distribute and modify. These actions can be either sanctioned by an Open Content license, or by commonly accepted practice.*

Thus, we excluded Open Source and Free Software projects and we also excluded scientific "open access" projects. The former because our focus was on cultural, rather than technical projects, the latter because they are mainly concerned with providing free access, and usually do not allow modification of content (which, within a scientific context, is usually not necessary because of a well-established culture of citation). Furthermore, we excluded, for reasons of practicality, works created by individuals and released under an open content license, be that the GFDL, or a CreativeCommons license with a ShareAlike provision. We also excluded (traditional) local practices of collaborative knowledge creation, done without the use of ICT. A a consequence, the open content projects relevant to this survey all use the internet, trying to take advantage of fact that copying, distribution and modification of information are significantly easier with digital than with analog media. The Internet, however, is often only one component of these projects, which tend to have strong local presences and create also printed and other analog media. Most projects also have some sort of institutional basis, be it an educational institution, an NGO, a cultural/political initiative or a internet-based community.

We conducted an exploratory survey of 84 open content projects in five geographic areas: Arab countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, India, Brazil and South East and Eastern Europe. The survey was conducted in late 2005, early 2006. The aim of the study is to assess the potential of the open content production process for areas and fields which are under served by the commercial players, be it that the market is too small for language reasons, or for the lack of a large-enough customer base with the required financial means. While we cannot claim

completeness, we believe that the range of projects allows insight into the complex ways in which these projects interact with their particular context and the vast differences this creates.

Main findings

Open content project rely on at least a kernel of a civil society, comprised of dedicated individuals, NGOs, educational institutions and initiatives, and others who see their own actions not only in terms of individual short-term pay-off, but also within the framework of a greater, common goal. That does not imply altruism, but a perspective that values open cooperation (i.e. where contributions are encouraged from people who are not formerly known). If that does not exist, be it that social tensions are too strong, or that economic situation is too harsh, open content projects cannot flourish.

It is perhaps useful to distinguish between projects set up around explicit cooperation, with stated goals and some sort of accepted guidelines (for example, the various Wikipedia projects) and projects where cooperation emerges less planned, based on affinities of independent actors, who remain visible as individuals or small groups (for example, blogging communities centered around particular issues, say, politics in Egypt). We'll call the first type *planned cooperation*, the second one *emergent cooperation*. This does not imply that the first type is fully planned, much less centrally controlled, nor that in the second there is no planning and explicit coordination at all. The main difference is that in the first, there is some overarching vision that guides the projects from the beginning (for example, to create a free encyclopedia) where in the other, nobody knows the actual shape of the collective project (for example, the number of blogs belonging to one issue-cluster, or the overall direction that these blogs will take). The overall dynamics of the two categories appear to be very different, and if we want to analyze open content projects, these two types seem hardly comparable, even if they are sometimes based on the same legal constructs (open content licenses).

Apart from a handful Wikipedia projects (in Portuguese, Polish and other Eastern European languages) open content projects based on planned cooperation remain fairly limited within the regions covered by this survey. The most successful ones are closely related to open source software projects (for example, localization and documentation projects, such as *Arab Eyes*) whereas others remain in very early stages and have not yet reached a critical mass. For such projects to grow beyond the usually small numbers of people who start it, some kind of institutional basis is required. This for several reasons. One is that open content projects rely on collaborative platforms to enable interaction and to serve as a repository of the material produced. Running a platform with a significant user base in a technological environment that is very dynamic requires continuous care and administration on a level that usually only dedicated professionals can provide. Together with the infrastructure requirements, this becomes expensive or burdensome quickly. An other reason is that open content projects tend to be very long-term. Indeed, they are mostly living community processes with a potentially infinite life-span. To provide continuous, long-term support is a task that quickly overwhelms smaller organizations who are not used to offering such services. Hence, without the explicit, dedicated support of either a public institution (usually, a university), or one or several NGOs, open content projects tend not last very long and fall apart before reaching a critical mass. Even in contexts where there is institutional support, for example for many open content projects in Brazil, these projects are still small, indicating that such long-term projects can take

a long time to prepare and get off the ground and that the approach is still very young.

Things are different for projects characterized by *emergent cooperation*, most notably blogging, a practice that exists for a comparatively long period of time (blogger.com, for example, was founded in 1999) and is thus quite well established and easy-to-do. Most of the bloggers in this survey rely on any of a number of globally-operating commercial service providers (blogger.com, sulekha.com, and others) which, from the point-of-view of the individual blogger, solves the problem of having to maintain complex technological infrastructure. Since these commercial platforms have advanced tools to connect users to one another, it's indeed possible to create communities from which something like cooperative content production emerges in a self-organized way. Indeed, blogging has taken off everywhere, even if the character of the most important blogs (in terms of having relevance beyond the blogger him/herself) varies widely. I will return to this point later on.

It will be interesting to see if the proliferation of relatively neutral platforms which support, but to not require, cooperation (such as Google Video, flickr and other so-called Web2.0 applications) will make it easier for open content projects to "spontaneously" emerge. For example, the *Shared Footage* project – Indian video makers pooling their footage of the Gujarat riots (2002) because none of them could cover an event that big and complex individually – might have profited from the availability of an easy-to-use, scalable video-sharing facility. Because no such platform was available, it was not possible to make the material available beyond two local offices that stored the physical tapes and made them available to people who came to search through them. Though, given the sensitivity of the material, not everyone might have felt comfortable to make it entirely available without any control over its use. Technological potential is always only one of the elements in an open content project.

Reaching critical mass, the point where a project becomes immediately useful to outsiders who thus feel compelled to contribute, is a very uphill battle for projects with planned cooperation. This because the rational of the project has to be established new, not fitting any preexisting agenda immediately. Rather, it must be defined in a way that touches upon a lot of existing agendas and motivations as to incorporate them into the project without being constrained by a single one. Wikipedia is a good example for this. It mobilizes the users' commitment to particular knowledge domains, without subsuming the whole project under any particular one. At the same time, it must show that contributing to the overall project furthers those individual agendas, rather than relying on acts of altruism. In other words, planned projects not only need to provide a unifying framework in which heterogenous individual agendas can be related productively, but also need to overcome initial negative feedback (lack of content fails to attract contributors, lack of contributors makes it difficult to generate content). To reach the tipping point, all such projects need significant input of resources. Yet another reasons why such projects tend to require institutional support.

The situation is different for projects relying on emergent cooperation. Here, there is no common framework necessary, but individuals follow their own incentives within their own framework. Cooperation emerges after the fact, either by being inspired by what other people do, or by finding common interests. Thus, the larger project emerges after the initial input has been provided and when a critical mass is reached. Indeed, reaching critical mass is not necessary at all, since the individual contributions (say, a specific blog) don't rely on it (there's no initial negative feedback). Of course, the transition from individual production to emergent cooperation is not a linear process, but one with feedback, where individual actors can self-

consciously reorient their work towards the common project. However, the core of the projects remain individual production, rather than the common framework, through which they can be strengthened, but they are rarely subsumed under it.

Open Content projects, relying on voluntary contributions of numerous people are extremely sensitive to local conditions. First, there needs to be sense that cooperation, sharing of information and knowledge creation in open communities are positive concepts. Clearly, these ideas do not resonate everywhere the same, even if there is a civil society. The differences between India and Brazil are indicative here. In many ways, the two countries are comparable when it comes to ICT use and policy. Both are characterized by extreme disparities on all levels, both have globally competitive high-tech industries and significant rate if illiteracy, both see ICT as key plank in their developmental strategies, both governments are active players in the global policy arena trying to affect IP policy in comparable directions. Yet, Brazil is by far the most active country in terms of open content projects, whereas in India, there are hardly any that reach beyond very small groups. Clearly, in Brazil, the ideas of open content (and, of course, open source) resonate deeply with the existing socio-cultural context, whereas in India they do not. Why? We can only speculate here, but it seems reasonable to assume that in Brazil, the common language helps to create a sense of shared culture, which is the basis of cooperation. In India, on the other hand, a sense of a common culture exists either locally, or within in the English-speaking elites which, particularly in the IT sector, tend to be very US oriented (there is no significant global IT outsourcing in Brazil, whereas the Indian IT sector was jump started by it). Beyond that, the cultural fragmentation is so deep that idea of open communities seems to hold little appeal. Brazil, as a relatively young country, has, since the 1930s, built its cultural identity on ideas of appropriation and transformation. The fact that with Gilberto Gil one of the leading artist of that tradition is also minister of culture gives this even more weight. In India, there is no such tradition at all. Furthermore, in Brazil, a key element of cultural identity is music, which is highly amendable to being produced in an open way. In India, on the other hand, the film industry is very important which in many ways is very closed (like all film industries). Tellingly, it's documentary filmmakers who are beginning to seriously think about alternative models of production/distribution in India.

In other words, the ideas behind open content are by no means universal but need to be translated into the different context creatively and precisely. The commonalities that form the basis for collaboration need to be mobilized, and these are different in every context. In the Arabian Wikipedia, the fact that there is shared language is a big asset (though there are other problems) whereas in ex-Yugoslavia, the shared language is a major problem. In South-Africa, universities are very active, partly because they are carriers of the post-apartheid national integrative project, whereas in Eastern Europe, particularly outside the EU, they tend to be strong-holds of particularisms.

The same specificity of local contexts characterizes also emergent cooperation. For example, in some Arab countries, particularly in Egypt, political blogs have gained significant importance, because they operate in a space where mainstream media are rather controlled, but not all political discourse is controlled. This is very different from Syria, where critical speech is very much repressed, and different again from Serbia, where the mass media are so unregulated and chaotic that additional voices can hardly be heard.

Open content projects, in order to attract contributors, need not just to be able to mobilize a sense of shared culture, but also be immediately useful to the community. Very few people

think of themselves as producing open content, hence the appeal of projects is not their 'openness' but their usefulness. And the usefulness can be very hard to see before the project reaches a critical mass. Again, this is more pertinent for project with *planned* than with those with *emergent cooperation.*

In general, given the difficulty of mobilizing institutional support in non-western countries (with the exception of Brazil) and the rapid development of web2.0 platforms, we can expect emergent cooperation to develop more quickly than planned one. The growth and significance of blogging is a case in point. However, as new forms of institutional arrangements that can support long-term are being developed, the potential of planned projects is very significant. This, however, will not be easy and will require new models of public, private, commercial and non-commercial partnerships.

Supporting Open Content Production

The deep differences between *planned* and *emergent cooperation* in terms of their social dynamics suggest that also the approaches to support the two types of open content projects need to be different. For planned cooperation, the main difficulty seems to be to reach critical mass. Here, but also later in the development/maintenance of the infrastructure, institutional support is necessary. Second, a core group of contributors needs to be assembled that push the project over this hurdle. NGOs, which usually produce significant information and have a real interest in making this accessible seems like ideal carries of such projects. However, in practice, this is less the case than what we expected. Why? Again, we have to speculate here, but there is clearly a lack of awareness, in both the potential of open content approach in supporting NGO goals and in the particulars of applying the method successfully. Raising awareness in this regard is difficult not just because the ideas are new and do not easily fit into existing organizational cultures, but also because NGOs are also being "educated" by large international agencies (such as the World Bank) to think of their materials as "intellectual property" that needs to be protected. So, the more general tension between open and closed approaches is being played out also on this level. Furthermore, NGOs are accountable to their funders for how they spent their donations. This can make cooperation with other NGOs problematic, since "leakage" of resources can create accountability problems. It's often not entirely clear who is producing a common resource, and it might be hard to argue why some organizations spend money on it while others seem to enjoy a "free-ride". Thus, when supporting an open content project, it is necessary to bring all the different NGOs working in a field onto the table and make sure that they all have a stake in the open project. The difficulty is to manage the tension between the fact that the recipient of the support is an individual organization, but that the actual project needs to be carried out by a network comprised of multiple entities, included several NGOs, but also individuals and, possibly, also commercial players. Finally, the relationship between paid-for and volunteer work needs to be carefully considered. Some paid-for work is necessary, because until a critical mass is reached, the usefulness of a project is not immediate,and can easily appear to involved organizations as yet another burden that is not immediately contributing to their real mission. However, if the paid-for aspects of the projects are too dominant, not only can it not scale, but the community

tends to close, and distinction between those inside and those outside emerges that even an open content license cannot overcome. "Openness" needs to be designed into the structure of the project from the beginning, rather than as something that is later added. Hence it is necessary to support an institutional arrangement that is unique designed for this task, rather than expecting open content projects from existing organizations as simply another thing to do.

For *emergent cooperation*, the situation is different. Here the core need to identify already active producers, and support efforts to increase their coordination. Here, regular conferences and other meetings might be very effective.

Open Content in the Arab World
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General Context
"In the Middle East, from the perspective of early 2005, the age of the old patriarchs seems to be nearing its end, and the new media – satellite television, mobile phones, the Internet – are often regarded as having precipitated this development by undermining governments' hegemonic control over the flow of information. The use of the Internet in the Arab world, however, is not very widespread, except among the younger, educated elites, where the Internet is increasingly a fact of life, and rapidly becoming an important factor in socialization. Two features are characteristic of the Arabic corner of the Internet: First, religion has greater weight than anywhere else in the world, and second, Arab users are particularly eager to engage in discussion – not least of politics, religion, and sex. In both domains, a growing assertion of the individual as an active speaker and decision-maker, not merely a passive recipient of authoritative discourse, is apparent. However, at present the Internet serves more clearly to extend one's private sphere than decisively to strengthen civil society vis-a-vis the state . Civil society groups do of course use the Net to facilitate and accelerate their external contacts and internal coordination and to reinforce their public visibility.

For a broader and more effective domestic mobilisation via the Internet, however, the user base remains too small, representing less than 10% of the Arab population. As for reaching publics at home, the Internet lags far behind other means of communication. However, in tandem with others (satellite TV, youth culture, and the "globalization" of consumer products, social networks, and ideational configurations), the Internet is one factor creating a dynamic of change that is helping to erode the legitimacy of traditional authority structures in terms of family, society, culture/religion, and also the state, thus creating pressure for reform. Young people are claiming "private" spaces of freedom that are influencing their social attitudes. In the wake of this process, ideas on the relations between state, society, and the individual that have been generally accepted for generations are changing, and the Internet is the medium in which such change is often most vigorously expressed." (Hofheinz, 2005)

Open Content Overview
Even when taking into account that the Internet is mainly accessible to a younger, urbanized, elite audience, the community that understands itself as producing "open content" is still very small. It is made-up of a small, internally well-connected group of individuals, mainly from Egypt and Jordan, the two countries in the region most oriented towards the Anglo-American West. Most projects struggle with small number of contributors, placing a great burden on those who do contribute. The community centers around two main projects, the Arab Wikipedia and the free and open source software (FOSS) localization / documentation projects Arabeyes. They could be described as the core of the 'movement'. Relatively well-established, connected to the international scene, partly supported in some way or another by international NGOs, and thus enjoying comparatively high visibility, locally and globally.

However, open content is also produced outside this self-conscious community. A second group of producers, partly overlapping with the first, runs individual and collaborative blogs which either explicitly, in form of a license, or implicitly, by intention and practice, allow derivative uses of their content. A third group of producers consists of NGOs who work in their respective fields and produce material that is increasingly put online (though this is often slowed down by lack of skills and infrastructure) and is, by intention and practice, made available for derivative use, even though they don't really think of themselves in terms of open content. Universities and other public institutions seem to be completely absent from this scene.

Main Projects

- *Wikipedia (ar.wikipedia.org)*
  The Arabic Wikipedia is part of the international Wikipedia project and thus enjoys high-visibility, good integration into the international community, and professional server infrastructure. However, though the project has been started in 2003 it is still struggling with first steps and to reach critical mass. Its growth has been comparatively modest. It currently (mid 2005) has not even 3000 articles. This is mainly due to the small number of contributors. This creates the problem that errors are not easily corrected and articles are slow to expand beyond the initial wright-up which may be only stub. This places a higher burden on the authors to get things right thus increasing the hurdle to contribute. Also, the range of contributors is not wide enough cover the full breadth of the topics that make up an encyclopedia. To deal with this problems, people sometimes research a new topic just to write an article, sometimes use the English as a basic reference, or stick to local topics of which they have first-hand knowledge. The target audience is the general public.
  There are currently discussions about merging other Arab online encyclopedias with the wikipedia to boost the number of articles. There are at least ten such encyclopedia, mostly focussed on a sub-domain (Syria, Kurdistan, law). Few of them are commercial but none of them is open content.[1]
  The project is explicitly open content by using the GFDL, like all Wikipedias.

- *Arabeyes (www.arabeyes.org)*
  Arabeyes describes itself as "a Meta project that is aimed at fully supporting the Arabic language in the Unix/Linux environment. It is designed to be a central location to standardize the Arabization process. Arabeyes relies on voluntary contributions by computer professionals and enthusiasts all over the world." Arabeyes is probably the single most successful open content project in the region and has contributed considerably over the last 3 years to establish a specifically Arabic Open Source community. Apart from localization, the project has produced documentation on issues of Arabic support, howtos and tutorials for translators, developers and users. Many of its contributors have acquired considerable skills in the process and are now experts in their field. Part of the project is an open dictionary (English – Arabic) which users can submit words and their translation. Perhaps partly because of the openness, the dictionary is deemed inconsistent and there is no clear development path how to improve that, even though the dictionary should provide the foundation of all other translation project. Its target audience are developers and translators.
  The project is explicitly open content by using the GFDL.

- *Comprehensive Linux Textbook (www.cltb.net/ar/index.html)*
  This is the only quite comprehensive GNU/Linux manual in Arabic and is referenced and used by all GNU/Linux User Groups in the region and thus quite popular. Most work is done by a single author, who adapts the contributions of others to ensure consistency. Despite this potential bottleneck, the project is update regularly, at least once a month. The goal is to keep it up-to-date indefinitely. Together with Arabeyes, this project provides the core of Arab FOSS documentation. Its target audience are new FOSS users.
  The project is explicitly open content by using the GFDL.

- *ELUG (www.eglug.org/article)*
  The Egypt Linux user group is the largest LUG in the Arab countries. Like LUGs it's main activity is in supporting the local Linux users in regard to technical issues, create events

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1 For a list of Arab online reference works, see
   http://ssgdoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/vlib/ssgfi/formal/almisbah_ej1_on_en.html

(such as install fests). However, the the project also includes advocacy material, course and training material on various FOSS related topics, content on how to organize similar efforts, reviews of FOSS projects and products and news about FOSS in the region. The project is a pure volunteer project, but has been able to establish connections to NGOs and FOSS companies which allow access to their resources and their employees to contribute to the project during working hours. One of the issues of the project is that many developers, steeped in the global FOSS discourse, find it easier to interact with one another in English than in Arabic and hence producing documents in Arabic requires extra effort. The target audience is Egyptian FOSS users.

In practice, the project is open content, even though the discussion which license to use is still ongoing.

- *Linux for Arab (www.linux4arab.com)*
Linux for Arab aims to be a news site for Linux related news in Arabic. It is run out of Amman, Jordan. It's the only of its kind the in the region, but due to the small number of volunteers, the frequency of the updates (every other months, at the moment) does not allow it to function as a timely resource. The target audience is the FOSS-oriented public who would also be the contributors. The site is currently offline.

The project is explicitly open content by using the GFDL.

Blogs
In the region blogs provide a platform of individuals or groups to raise issue in public that are not to be found in broadcast media. While there are some blogs that deal, among others, also with FOSS/OC issues (run by people involved in main projects), there are also others that deal with entirely unrelated issues but which produce, in practice, open content. Of course, there are also scores of others that are, well, just blogs, even though, as mentioned in the general introduction, the ability of the individuals (rather than officials) to speak in public is, in itself, already a relevant event.

- *Misir Digital (misrdigital.blogspirit.com)*
This is a relatively new (founded in February 2005) but already a widely successful citizen journal which is based in people documenting (with digital cameras) and then publishing events that are not, or not adequately covered by the mainstream, local media. It bills itself an "Independent Electronic Egyptian Weekly Newspaper" though the rhythm of it's update varies widely, to reflect the developments of events. The contents of the site are used by Egyptian opposition and by other independent media, occasionally even by international media. Its contributor base, and its target audience is the Egyptian public. It's a pure volunteer project, running off a Western commercial infrastructure provider, blogspirit.com.

The project is explicitly open content by using a CC, derivatives license.

The project could be considered as the most significant open content project whose users/contributors are not connected to the international FOSS/OC discourse/practice.

- *Lam Alef (www.lamalef.net)*
Lam Alef is the spelling of la, the Arabic word for "NO". It is based in Cairo, Egypt. It started when the project members realized that most political arabic websites where heavily moderated and that certain points-of-views and ideas where not allowed anywhere even on the web. The website was created to specifically allow non mainstream political views or unusual approaches and ways to look at issues. It also covers topics that did not receive a fair share of news coverage in mainstream media.
It was one of the earliest projects (funded in 2002) and was very successful by changing the nature of online publications in the Arab world, but has not been update in more than a

year.
The project is open content in practice, but does not contain a specific copyright notice.

NGOs
NGOs which are already creating lots of material not primarily intended for sale, could become important producers of open content. There are, however, some obstacles. First, there is a lack of awareness in a) the practice of open content and b) the value of connecting one's organization to a larger, global social movement while remaining focussed on local issues. Second, there is a lack of skills and resources to put material online, probably also because often the target audience of the NGOs is not online.

• *NGO Coalition on Child Rights (*www.ngo-crc.org/*)*
  The NGO-CRC is a coalition of almost all Egyptian NGOs focussed on child development and children's rights. It has an extensive library of material relevant to these issues, training manuals, activity books, reports and documentation to all sorts of projects collected from member NGOs and affiliates. A significant amount of content is being developed by the coalition as a collaborative activity (including material developed by children participating in CRC activities). Much of the material is produced within individual projects, run by members and later published. Some of this material is produced collaboratively by children. Most of this is traditional, paper-based material. However, the website has been launched earlier this years and there is an intention to use it to publish not just news, but general material as well, though this is slow in being realized, partly because if a lack of technology experience and resources.

  While there is no clear copyright statement, the intention is to allow free copying of and reuse of almost all content developed by the NGO-CRC and most content collected from member organizations and affiliates. It seems that this is standard among education-oriented NGOs, because at least in Egypt the copyright law is relaxed when copying is done for educational purposes.

• *Human Rights Information Network (*www.hrinfo.net/*)*
  This is the single most important human rights advocacy group in the region, and a member of the international IFEX network. They collect and publish information about human rights abuses in the region and try to bring it the awareness of a larger regional (and also international) audience. They forms an important node in the network of human rights in the region, also helping many other NGOs and individuals to set up their own websites and trained them in based HTML and other relevant skills.

  Their material are explicitly open content, their copyright statement allows reproduction and derivative uses. In their training of other NGOs, they tend to promote the ideas of open content.

Conclusion
The open content movement as understood in the West, is rather week, even if around the Wikipedia and various FOSS initiatives, important projects have been established and manage to survive despite a small base of contributors. However, there are many other groups which do, implicitly and explicitly, produce open content. As that, they do create an important practice which could provide an important basis to extend the movement. What might be helpful to accomplish this goal would be to bring together the various groups mentioned above, highlighting what they have in common, share the

different experiences and helping them understand who being more explicitly open content can help them in their specific projects.

Reference

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Open Content in Africa

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General Introduction
Internet access is Africa is sparse. The overwhelming number of people outside the major center does not have access, indeed, only 1.7% of the population is online, half of them are from South Africa and Egypt. However, increasingly institutions (schools, NGOs, etc) are online and cybercafes are numerous in most countries. Of course, very substantial issues in basic literacy (only 50%, overall) and infrastructure on all levels remains. For a large number of people, mobile phones are easier to access than the internet.

Most projects related to Open Source and Open Content are focussing on some aspect of education, usually based on a mix of local initiatives and international support. A relatively new development, but one that has been growing steadily, are African blogs, focussing on local issues, written in local languages. Most the the bloggers are well connected internationally and/or are media professionals. Together with the education sector, they appear to be the most dynamic producers of open content.

Below is a survey of the most important projects and a report, written by Heather Ford, on the main challenges/potential for open content in Africa.

Educational Projects
*   Thutong: South Africa Education Portal (www.thutong.org.za)
    Thutong is an educational resource portal created by the South African National Department of Education and provides a range of curriculum, policy and administrational resources to South African learners (students), educators (teachers), education administrators and managers and parents. The resource is very large and aims to grow further. The project is new, but due to the heavy support of the Department of Education, the resource can be assumed to be very stable and is built with a long-term perspective. It is clearly one of the major nodes providing free online educational material in Africa. Due to the processional orientation of the site, it's not entirely trivial to use and thus geared primarily towards professionals in the educational sector, rather than students or the general public.

    There are numerous ways in which community participation is encouraged. Educators can upload new content. In order to ensure quality standards, a comparatively elaborate has been set up. When resources are submitted, they are marked as 'private'. This means that they need to be checked before being released for public use. In the first instance, this places resources in a 'user-submitted' pool of content. The content will then be reviewed by experts, who will decide if its quality justifies completing any missing meta-data not submitted by the original contributor and elevating the content to the 'quality-controlled' pool of content. In the search facilities, users can specify which pools of content they would like to search.

    In addition, a user-driven ranking facility which will be fully functional in the near future. Its long-term objective is to allow users to rate resources and then have the average rating for a resource to display. Although this is technically already possible, it's not really used and Thutong still have to begin a series of processes to work out how to make it simple and worthwhile to add ratings. Once functional, this will mean that users form an additional layer of quality assurance for other users.

The focus of the site is clearly national, but anyone can register (even though one has to pretend to be from SA) and access the resources. The licenses used are standard CreativeCommons licenses, some allowing other prohibiting derivative uses. However, despite the national orientation, the licenses do not restrict access and use of the material to SA residents (in difference to, say, the BBC's Creative Archive initiative in the UK).

- HSRC Press (http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/)
  HSRC Press is a relatively small (8 staff) but important and influential open access publisher of social science books, based in Cape Town, SA. It has a considerable experience in publishing its own material (that is, research (partially) funded by the Human Science Research Council) and material submitted for publication by other academic authors. The open access part is relatively new, fully functional since 2004, but including much (or perhaps even all) of its back catalogue. It operates like a standard academic publisher (author centered, peer-review, focussed on an academic domain), books can be ordered by the publisher (online and offline), or purchased in standard academic books stores. In addition, all books are available for free online as pdfs. HRSC is currently in discussion with CC, SA to publish its future output under a CC license. It's the first fully functional academic open access publisher in Southern Africa and one of the few world wide that applies this model not just to periodicals, but to full books.

- SchoolNet Africa (www.schoolnetafrica.net)
  SchoolNet Africa "is one of Africa's first African-led, African-based non-government organisations (NGO) that operates across the continent in its endeavour to improve education access, quality and efficiency through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in African schools. SchoolNet Africa works mainly with learners, teachers, policymakers and practitioners through country-based Schoolnet organisations across Africa." Thus, its focus is far beyond open content. In fact, it's main focus is on setting up technical infrastructure for schools and technical training in some 29 countries on the continent (including Northern Africa).

  In terms of content production, the main initiative is a portal called *The African Education Knowledge Warehouse* (AEKW). This is a pan-African education portal which services African SchoolNet community. The portal includes the following resource areas: Policy Centre, Learner Centre, African Teachers Centre, Gender Watch and Innovation Watch.

  One of the primary objectives within SchoolNet Africa is to develop local content in local languages which can be shared throughout the continent. Learners are encouraged, with the assistance of educators, to develop content themselves. This allows learners to strengthen their research and social skills, and also makes learners aware of the value found in the creation of local content. Content is either acquired from partner organisations, or contributed by the users. In the case of the latter, it is evaluated by experienced educators. One of the challenges is that there are no widely shared standards of quality against which to assess and improve user submitted content. There is also the a platform for collaborative content creation by students (ThinkQuest Africa), but it appears to be abandoned (last entry is from 2003).

  While SchoolNet's practice is very much, and explicitly, open source oriented, it does not use a open content license, though it seems that this is more a matter of expediency than of policy.

- Itrain Online (www.itrainonline.org)
  This initiative is designed to assist civil society organisations and other stakeholders in developing nations, to overcome ICT challenges. The website offers free educational content such as basic computer skills (example: finding information online), strategic uses (example: building online communities), web development (example: website management), multimedia (example: telecentres), technical issues (example: databases), resources for trainers (example: effective training) and resources for women (example: ICT resources). Content is available in french, spanish and english.

  No official license is utilised at this stage. In the 'About Us' section on the website there is an 'Open content site' section which states that ItrainOnline is committed to the free and fair sharing of development information. The information and annotations on the site are free, and can be reproduced, translated, and disseminated without restriction. Most of the material described in the collection is free. Users are asked to please respect the copyright restrictions on the external sites described on this site.

  The project is supported by major organizations (such as the FAO, UNESCO etc) and broadly aimed at the South, meaning there is little information that is locally specific and while users can suggest new content to be included, there is little to encourage the development of content by local communities.
  A wide range of technical open content is available, but a fair amount of this information is 'international' and has not been created for local users. Although the itrain online editors are able to select information that is the most relevant, the content does not necessarily cover issues which are peculiar to the local environment, and given the nature of the information, much of it is not presented in relevant language or style. However, the Womens' Resources contains open content which has been specifically created for the South.

  The quality of the material is high, but involvement is low. The calendar which lists local 'training events' has a single entry (for a two day training event in Uganda) for the months July-Sept. 2005. It has a distinct feeling of 'experts' taking to 'non-experts'.

- KWEL (kewl.uwc.ac.za)
  KEWL stands for Knowledge Environment for Web-Based Learning. It is an open source learning management system that has been developed by Derek Keats at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town. KEWL presents about 40 online courses covering subjects such as biology, law, accounting and social work. KEWL's objective is to partner with other African institutions to enable collaboration, open sharing of knowledge, and make possible distance learning. KEWL has been adopted by other institutions such as the University of Ghana Legon and the NetTel Africa project. KEWL content is available in English, Xhosa and Zulu.

  It is a very large project, with currently some 27,000 registered users. Of these, a bit more than 6,000 are guests (non-university members), some 20,000 are university students, more than 500 are lecturers, and 41 are systems administrators. KEWL has 1641 courses, of which 326 are full online courses, and 1315 are marks only courses, but it's unclear which are actually offered at the moment and to whom.

  One needs to be a registered user to access the system (which assumes one is from SA) but it's not

necessary to be a university students and account information is not authenticated in any way. Nevertheless, the system is clearly geared towards the needs of professors and their students and the material offered is usually in support of an existing course, rather than offering 'distance education' degrees. The system is also difficult to navigate, hence expects users to know where they want to go, rather than invite them to look around and find information. The content is created by professors for their courses, hence the quality is generally high. It's explicitly open content by using the GNU FDL, but the site is not set up for collaborative content development.

At the moment, it seems like the bulk of resources is going into the development of the platform (the main new entry one sees upon login announces a new version of the code).

- Open Knowledge Network, Africa (www.openknowledge.net)
  OKN Africa is a 'human network' that, through digital means, collects local knowledge in local languages and shares and disseminates this knowledge with other communities within Africa. OKN operates in an offline and online environment. It is coordinated by a peer-to-peer network of Knowledge Workers. OKN makes use of open content licensing an aims to adapt sustainable business models to different contexts, and in some communities makes use of mobile phone technology for sharing content.

  OKN is very ambitious. It's currently active in countries (Kenya, Senegal, Mali, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and South Africa) and it's basic structure seems to be to establish 'access point' where 'knowledge workers' help to collect local knowledge, edit it, and put it online for sharing. This is done in partnership with other local organization and involves technology training, and business plan development. The goal is to support the creation and distribution of local and locally relevant content in local languages. One of the most publicized projects supported by OKN is Kenya Mobile, which distributes local information (such as jobs) to subscribers (currently about 5'000) via SMS.

  Judging from the website the amount of content actually developed is still very small, which indicates that still a lot of resources are devoted to setting up the infrastructure and comparatively little on actual content development. However, it seems (based on projects described in their newsletter) that much of the content is indeed so local that it never appears in the main web space. This goes a bit against the idea of sharing locally created knowledge.

  There is an explicit commitment to open content, but no clear licensing information is available.

- Genderstats (www.genderstats.org.za)
  Women'sNet Gender Stats is a project within WomensNet. (Womensnet is an online networking support program which provides resources and educational tools and presents issues for women.) GenderStats is a research and information resource for girls and women, which seeks to support active participation of this group in debate and events, with the view to 'advancing gender justice in South Africa'. The website provides educational resources to women and girls and tracks the SA government's progress in terms of the United Nations CEDAW convention and BPFA initiative to promote the use of ICT to enhance women's knowledge and education, encourage participation in society, and improve economic empowerment. The website also serves to provide the means of interaction between government, civil society and citizens.

It's a fairly classic social research project carried out by seven professional researchers which distributes its material online under a CC license that allows derivative uses.

- Blogs (www.blogafrica.com)
  Blogafrica.com, a site established by the geekcorps and the Berkman Center, lists currently more than 500 blogs relating to Africa. Most of them are from SA, or African expats, but not all. Like most bloggers around the world, the discourse is fairly international and many are published under some version of the CC license. While most blogs are in English, there are also many that are in local languages. For example, there are some 20 blogs in Kiswahili from Tansania, plus another 4 more that are bilingual. A country-by-country list is maintained by the Berkman Center (http://cyber.law.harvard.edu:8080/globalvoices/wiki/index.php/BridgeBlog#Africa). There are some blog aggregators, for example, Pambazuka News, focussing on social justice reporting, has a dedicated section called Africa Blog Round-up (http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?category=Blogging%20Africa) which itselfs, however, is not open content, but freely available.

Why the lack of open content in Africa?

Heather Ford, 5 August, 2005

Trying to find open content projects in Africa may seem frustrating. There seems to be very little on the Internet written by Africans about Africa. But if you look at the number of Africans that are actually Internet users then the picture looks a little more realistic.

Problem 1: Low audience levels

If you consider that only 1.7% of Africans are online and that over half of this number resides in South Africa and Egypt, the number of websites developed by Africans is relatively high. Add to that the low literacy levels (about 50% of the population) and you begin to recognise that the Internet is not currently a medium that offers any significant local audiences in Africa.

Many local content developers complain about the feelings of isolation when developing content for local audiences – the percentage of the population that are active users is so low that the feedback and interactivity potential that drives non-commercial content is not fully realised.

Of course, if you consider the opportunities presented by a relatively high demand for African content from a large western audience, it seems to be a good idea for Africans to increase the levels of their content production to meet demand. It also appears to be a good idea for Africans to open up their knowledge and opinions to a global audience because a closed approach wouldn't necessarily benefit emerging voices.

The problem is that Africans have yet to recognise their active participation or at least presence on the Internet as an "opportunity".

Problem 2: Africans are afraid of "theft"

The Internet is a medium where success is determined by the wealth of knowledge that the market perceives you hold in any particular sector. Google is successful because the market perceives it to have the best knowledge about search technology. The theory is that if you know more than your competitors about a subject – or at least you tell people about how much more you know – you will become a market leader in your field.

The issue here is that you have to share your knowledge in order to grow your reputation, your brand, your perceived wealth. And newcomers to the field will have to do that better than the others.

But Africans have little faith in sharing knowledge when the local discourse around "intellectual property" is focused on stories of how Africans' local knowledge has been "stolen" by outsiders. Add to this the fact that much of the knowledge that is published on the Internet by Africans is actually consumed outside the continent, by a massive, unknown, unseen and largely unregulated community (try suing someone from copyright infringement in the United States), and you begin to realise how content development for international audiences has less appeal – especially for small companies and organisations.

Also, until we dissolve the idea – through popular debate and statistics – that open content is another way to extract value from developing countries and feed new wealth to the west, the ideals of "open content" will remain isolated to the academic community in Africa.

Problem 3: Legal complexities and costs are too high in the content industry

As Lawrence Lessig argues (Free Culture: 2004), culture and knowledge has never been cheaper, more accessible, but legal issues are so complex – even with licences like Creative Commons that try to make the legal process simpler and cheaper – that copyright can, and does, strangle the potential for more people to engage in sustainable publishing initiatives on the Internet.

There are many possible solutions to this particular set of problems. In order to assist local content developers to navigate the terrain of legal issues on the internet, a legal advice body, with knowledge of alternative licences such as Creative Commons, could be set up as an accessible point of reference. The problems with the current complexities of copyright law in the digital age cannot be solved until there is legislative reform, but one thing is certain: without access to the infrastructure and the support to understand how they can protect their intellectual wealth and develop value from it, Africa's forays into the knowledge economy will continue to be isolated to call centre development and low-end technological support.

Problem 4: Missing the "branding" boat

An interesting point about open content in Africa is that many African websites do, in fact, contain most of the elements of "open content" but without a licence or alignment with the open content movement that is characterised by many western sites. This scenario plays itself out in many arenas of African trade. Many African products, for example, are essentially "organic" simply because fertilizers and pesticides etc are too expensive for many farmers. But because Africans are unaware of the popular organic food movement, they are unable to take advantage of branding themselves in line with international trends.

In the same way, many organisations in Africa subscribe to open content principles, with wording on their websites that states what users can do with the material. Because they don't see it as 'strategic' to align themselves with the legal licencing movements, Africa is seen as a "dark continent" when it comes to the uptake of Creative Commons and other open content licences.

If one had to look at a map of the adoption and uptake of Creative Commons licences in Africa (see a post from www.lessig.org/blog below), one would think that Africa is, indeed, the "dark continent". But if one had to analyse the percentage of sites that adopt open content principles in some way (most often without the use of a licence) then the picture is not so bleak. This is not to say that licences are unimportant in Africa – they are, perhaps most important here – but it is critical to recognise that licences are not the only piece in a puzzle where the question is: 'How do we stimulate the development of local content in Africa?'
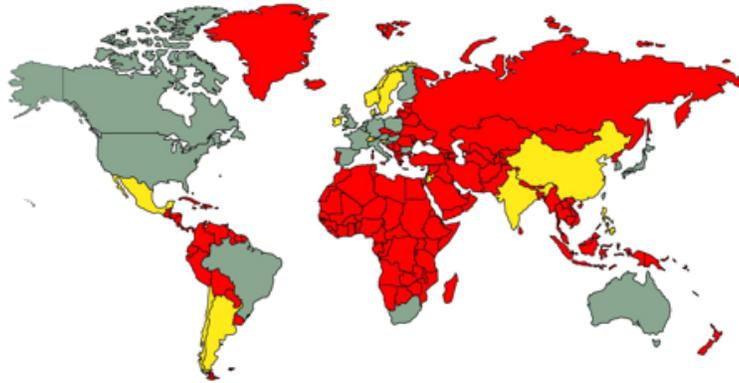
As of Thursday, the current spread of **Creative Commons**. The green are countries where the project has launched. The yellow are close. The red is yet to be liberated.

posted by [Lessig] on [**Jun 8 05 at 6:50 PM**] to [**creative commons**] [post diffusion: **6 trackbacks + technorati**]

Problem 5: A lack of local applications

Many bandwidth bytes are taken up discussing why Africans have come so late to the blogging table. These debates have been given new direction in relation to South Africa, as blogging recently started to gain "popular" support[2]. In my opinion, the reason for this sudden change is due to the fact that M&G Online recently released a free, visible platform for bloggers in South Africa. M&G Online's 'Blogmark' (licenced under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 licence) is only a few months old and yet it receives over 1,500 unique users a day and has some 950 local bloggers on its pages. Local bloggers know that over 1,500 could read their blog if they make their mark (the home page lists latest entries rather than most popular) providing huge incentives for new authors and publishers. The 'Blogmark' case has displayed how the implementation of local software is critical to establishing a local community of content creators and users who can feed off and engage with one another.

Problem 6: Lack of infrastructure

Another reason why blogging is catching on in South Africa is because it has relatively low technological requirements – you only need a computer with an Internet connection if you want to blog. But what about content like video, animation or photography that require relatively large capacity computers, expensive software and high bandwidth to produce and disseminate? Development of this type of content is currently isolated to expensive training centres, and a handful of advertising and private sector entertainment companies. The opportunity for community access to new media content production is lost in telecentres that operate on thin client machines with limited hardware and facilities as policy-makers attempt to scale up access to ICTs. Equipment in African telecentres presumes a user who wants to learn how to type out their CV and look for jobs online. But the potential for local communities to be producing new media is huge – especially as the costs of producing video and animation decreases. Countries like Brazil have recognised this potential. The Department

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2   The typical blogger in South Africa is still white, male with an income in the top 10% of the population, but the numbers of bloggers has risen steeply over the past 2 years.

of Arts and Culture has recently started a project called 'One thousand points of culture' to establish multimedia community access points throughout the country that enable people to create free, open culture that can be shared with the world. Africa can learn some great lessons from Brazil's approach to technology as a way for communities to actively create and share local culture. Instead of sending billions out of the country every year as consumers of a 'Coca Cola culture', Africa could be using some of that money to build a local content industry independent from the United States. The development of such an industry is dependent on the openness of such content – in terms of a) initially competing with imported culture, b) ensuring the rapid spread of local cultural products c) and enabling others to build on, improve and collaborate in the development of local culture.

Successful digital projects

In 2004, the Riverbend Learning Solutions Group was asked to develop a website for an SABC 2 television programme called 'Tsha Tsha'. Tsha Tsha was a weekly television series that focused on young people living in a world affected by HIV/AIDS and other social problems. The television show reached in excess of 2-million viewers per episode, but there was a comprehensive strategy for attracting post-broadcast discussion on radio talkshows (in 9 languages), big screen viewings with facilitated discussions in higher educational institutions and to organizations involved in HIV/AIDS training and education.

The brief to Riverbend Learning was to target the Tsha Tsha website at young black South Africans. The idea for the website was simple. Each week users would be asked to introduce new characters to Lubisi (the fictional rural town in which Tsha Tsha is based). Users would email scriptwriters (in either English or Sepedi) with a synopsis of their character, choosing one of a range of character photographs from the website to choose from. Each week, users would vote new characters in or out of the story, while scriptwriters "wrote in" the most popular characters. The person with the best entry was invited to be in the final episode of the series. Despite all predictions that users wouldn't have access to the website and that scriptwriters and other personnel wouldn't be able to integrate into the television timetable, the website was a roaring success.

In retrospect, the Tsha Tsha website had a number of winning ingredients that no predications about low access levels could have stopped:

a) audience engagement: the audience was actively involved in telling their own story
b) dedicated support: a full time translator and scriptwriter worked on the project for its entire duration
c) local language support: the website was fully translated into both English and Sepedi
d) medium integration and marketing profile: the website drew audiences from the television program, from viewings outside of broadcast hours and from training programmes – all contributing towards a very high viewership of the main product. The television programme advertised the website and television audiences were able to feed back through the website medium, which, in turn, fed back into the television programme (the winner got to be in the final show). This seamless integration of traditional and new media was vital to the success of the website, and required an "open" approach to copyright in order to disseminate the programme as widely as possible.

This example shows how the development of local content in Africa is not reliant only on high access levels. If content is relevant, immediate and powerful, audiences will find a way to get to it – and even interact with it in powerful ways as this example shows.

Why open content is important

"Open content" philosophies, such as collaborative development of content presented by projects such as Wikipedia, are critical tools for the development of African content. If one considers the need for African contextual content one realises just how important it is for us to find new ways of producing content more

quickly and efficiently. Open content is an important tool, not only to help source the 'raw materials' with which we can build localised, contextualised content, but also in order to decrease the time to development of content projects by employing collaborative, community-based efforts of producing knowledge.

But the priority for open content should be shared equally for local content – content developed by Africans. As Jarred Cinman noted in an article about the problems with the South African government not considering the use of a) local, and b) open source software in Black Economic Empowerment policy and tenders (see www.linux.co.za), the local aspect of open content must be encouraged and supported if we are to enjoy any benefits in the future. If we don't prioritise the local and the open at the same time, "open" content will continue to be as irrelevant as the majority of content is currently for African users in education, culture and science.

And why open content isn't the only importance

In conclusion, it is important to note that the tools for "open content" (i.e. licences) are still not sufficient to guarantee the rapid development of open content in Africa. As I've started to show, open content licences are just one piece of a puzzle that is fraught with challenges. If our goal is to enhance the presence of Africans on the Internet through the development of local, open content, then one needs to look at the issue holistically in order to arrive at a solution that offers a myriad of different tools. New media infrastructure, local applications, supportive open, local content policy, and an awareness of branding and new legal and development models all need to be considered if we are to see the emergence of Africa as a significant presence in the global digital information commons.

Open Content in Brazil

with ori Holmes, Rio de Janeiro, and Tatiana Wells, midiatatica.org/Brasil

Internet in Brazil

As of late 2005, Brazil has close to 26 million internet users, 14% of the overal population, compared to 26% in Argentina and 35 % in Chile. The overal number hides very substantial regional differences, with the main hubs of internet usage concentrated on major cities, where also the major media corporations are located. Brazil is a country of social extremes, and access to the Internet reflects this.

Since 2000, a series of public policy efforts have been aimed to expand access to the Internet beyond the main hubs and to people cannot afford commercial services. In addition to this, there are many local NGOs (such as a http://www.vivafavela.com.br/ active since 2000) which have considerable track record in brining interent to excluded from the mainstream. Nevertheless, particularly in poorer, rural areas access to the interent is often inexistent and the local insitutions such as school or community centers, do not have the skills and means to provide access.

Open Content overview

Since the center-left government of Lula took office on January 1, 2003, these policies have intesified and gained an explicit "open source" orientation, arguing that it open source software is suitable for developing countries than proprietary software. In this context, numerous initiatives, private and public, are working to develop rich open content resources. In many such attempts benefit not only from the explicit public policy, but from a strong Brazilian cultural nationalism, based on a unique (in the North and latin American context) common language, Portuguese. Furthermore, the ideas of open content, of appropriation and transformation of cultural material as deep resonances within Brazilian cultural history. For example, one of the first nationalist cultural movement, spearheaded by the writer Oswald de Andrade, drew upon the theme of cannibalism as a central motif for its theoretical and artistic program. In the 1960s, the Tropicalismo movement, updates and translated many of these idea to the field of music. Today, one of it's main protagonist, Gilberto Gil, is Minister of Culture and a strong supporter of openc content projects.

Thus, the combination of cultural nationalism and a deep affinity within modern Brazilian culture to what is now called open content, provide the fundation for a strong involvment of both the state and educational insitutions in numerous projects.

While most of these projects are in the very early stages, and are often still hampered by the very unequal access to interent and the encessary skill, both the scope of the projects, and the supporting public policy initiatives, make it likely that the momentum built up so far will accellerate.

Open Content Projects

Social/political/educational projects

Midiatatica
www.midiatatica.org

Midiatatica is a network that connects itself through common areas of research and action. With members from all over brazil it has a new media centre space in rio de janeiro, where they produce regular free source software workshops, study groups (cinema, gender, art and media) and a metareclycling space. Its activities are located at the intersection of politics, media, activism and art, with focus on local participation and international networking (through the 'tactical media' network).

Estudio Livre
www.estudiolivre.org

Estudiolivre.org [Free/Open Studio] is a collaborative environment providing support to the production and sharing of independent media using free/open source software. It is used in the context of the development of new forms of media production and research in the field of ICTs. The community involved in estudiolivre.org believes that the use of free/open source software in the creative process is the ideal medium to increase and improve the circulation of cultural goods. However, stimulating its use and development remains a difficult task. Human nature finds it very difficult to accept paradigmatic shifts, and the novelty of the process combined with the lack of knowledge and the complexity of some of the tools, only increases this resistance. In the specific case of countries where English is not widely spoken, the difficulty of using these tools is aggravated by the lack of tools in the users' own language. Open multimedia software face even more barriers due to the advanced stage of development of the proprietary tools.

To make up for this vacuum, the IPTI [Institute for Research in Information Technology, Brazil] team is implementing, in partnership with the Brazilian government, non-profit-making organizations and civil society, the installation and maintenance of an interactive environment to support the process of implantation of the Pontos de Cultura [a key component of the Brazilian Ministry of Culture's 'Living Culture' programme, Culture Points lay the foundations for a horizontal network aimed at linking, receiving, and disseminating initiatives and creative impulses. They also constitute beacons, small focal points without any hierarchical levels, as well as points of support and levers for new social and cultural processes. As mediators in the relationship between government and civil society, Culture Points bring together key players who link up and drive community-based actions]. When navigating around the estudiolivre.org site, the user will find, in the embedded virtual structure, not only information in Portuguese, but also possibilities for communicating interactively through the network. Through this discovery, he/she begins no longer to feel alone with the new tools, and therefore integrates him/herself more easily into the process.

All the tools on estudiolivre.org are based on FOSS concepts, open knowledge and technological appropriation. The stimulus for interaction with this environment comes through personal weblogs, downloadable media, user manuals, forums, research groups, discussion lists and other tools for collaborative working. To interact through the site, the user must: register his/her personal details; state that he/she is the originator of material (music, images, audiovisual, software, text, samples, etc.) which is being sent to estudiolivre.org and authorise, without exclusivity, its exhibition and electronic distribution through the www.estudiolivre.org address according to the conditions set out in the Terms of Use; declare that all the intellectual property rights of the site were completely satisfied and authorized, taking exclusive, irrevocable and unretractable responsibility for the information provided and assuming the responsibility for any complaints from third parties about the material which has been submitted; be aware that estudiolivre.org has no obligation regarding the exhibition and distribution of such work and that no remuneration will be provided for the material licensed, exhibited and distributed through the site.

The idea of estudiolivre.org is to integrate different perspectives about the production of free/open media, responding to the diversity of interests of the users, as well as the heterogeneity of levels of knowledge of people visiting the space. In this way, both beginners as well as experienced users and software developers can share information and experiences. The following phrase, taking from the concept for the Estúdio Livre, illustrates this idea: "the resource algorithm for use of this environment will lead to the differences between the terms users and developer ceasing to exist, because it is culture in its purest state will be influence the direction and the meaning of its existence".

Centro de Tecnologia e Sociedade
www.direitorio.fgv.br/cts

The Centro de Tecnologia e Sociedade (Centre for Technology and Society – CTS) is part of the Law School of the Fundação Getulio Vargas (Getulio Vargas Foundation - FGV) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Its institutional mission is to deal with all the social aspects of the relationship between law and technology. The CTS develops various types of projects, e.g. in the areas of privacy, telecommunications and software development, as well as being responsible for the development of the Creative Commons project in Brazil.

Internally, the CTS adopts an "open courseware model", similar to the MIT, meaning all teaching material are posted online as open content.

Given the institutional support and the importance of CreativeCommons in Brazil, the CTS is one of the core nodes in the open content networks of Brazil and beyond.

Yai – Apoio Tecnológico para uma Educação Solidária
www.yainet.org
YAI - Technological Support for an Education Based on Solidarity. One of the problems faced by public school teachers is access to good quality teaching materials to support them in planning and executing their pedagogical task. Every day, in the course of their activities, different people produce content (text, music, videoclips, software tools, games, exercises, tips, proposals for teaching activities, comments on other content...) which may be useful for a

wider audience, but which are used only once or only a few times. These products are therefore lost due to the lack of mechanisms to share them more widely. In order to facilitate a less restrictive use of good quality educational content, which can be adapted by the teacher without violating intellectual property rights, this project will promote the donation of such content, by encouraging the authors to make the content available under flexible use licenses, to any interested party, through a computer tool available on the internet.

It seems very well designed, with mutilple evaluation criteria (first an administrator assessing the submitted material if it fits the educational contexts, then users can rank it). At the moment, the project is just starting up and small.

The project is developed by the faculty of computer science at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas, and this shows in the sophistication of the platform and it will remain to be seen how connection to the school teachers who should produce and reuse the content will work.

Livre Didático
www.prudente.unesp.br/livredidatico

There are many incentives for teachers to make use of computer-based resources and the different levels of government (federal and state) have been making efforts to train teachers in the use of information technology. However, its use by teachers remains timid, restricted to the individual level or to searching for and checking information on the internet. Teachers do not see themselves as the creators of knowledge. This project aims to recover the role of the teacher as the actor and author of his or her practice. Its aim is to reach what Oliver Martins calls the 'collective systematisation of knowledge'. Many teachers prepare classroom activities on a daily basis, but these materials are generally not shared and certainly not in a systematic way. Based on research, this project was designed to help teachers to systematise their production of teaching materials and participate in the construction of a national database, making their own materials available to others and making use of the materials and activities prepared by other teachers to enrich their classes. The Livre Didático (Open Didactics) project is an online store of teaching materials prepared by users of the site, mainly teachers. The materials are free and publicly accessible. The project is based at the Department of Education of the State University of São Paulo (UNESP) - Presidente Prudente campus, Brazil. Livre Didático is linked to other distance learning projects developed by UNESP and other Brazilian universities.

In terms of the basic goals and approaches, there is lots of overlap with YAI project. The project has also just started and is still very small, with barely any content available. The fact that it's from educational faculties shows itself in the very basic technical set-up of the site. If they are better able to connect to teachers in the field is open at this point.

Domínio Público
www.dominiopublico.gov.br

The 'Portal Domínio Público' (Public Domain Portal), set up by the Brazilian Ministry of Education, aims to support knowledge sharing in a fair way. The portal provides free online access to a virtual library made up of literary, artistic and scientific works (text, sounds,

images, and videos) which are already in the public domain or which are authorised for sharing, and which make up the Brazilian and universal cultural heritage. The portal allows for the collection, integration, preservation and sharing of knowledge. It aims to encourage learning, innovation and cooperation between the creators of content and the users of the content, as well as to stimulate a wide discussion about legislation related to intellectual property rights – in such a way that the 'preservation of some rights encourages other uses' and that there is an adaptation to the new paradigms of technological change and the production and use of knowledge.

The project is still in its infancy. There is very little content on the site (e.g. 2 documentary films, the section "contemporary music" consists of the Wired CD published under a CC license). But given the involvment of the ministry, the project could either grow significantly, or be stopped wiuth the next political change.

References Material

Divulgação Científica em Meio Ambiente
www.meioambiente.pro.br

Meio Ambiente is part of a project for making public open content relating to the environment. All the content from this page can be freely reproduced, even commercially, without the need for authorization from the authors. The only requirement is to maintain the citation of the authors' names, adding the names of new contributors, and to explain which parts of the content were modified. ANA- Agência Nacional das Águas [National Water Agency] has already used the text 'Guia Avançado das Águas Subterrâneas' [Advanced Guide of Underground Waters] as part of one of their publications. Through the project, the coordinator is in touch with many people and responds to questions and queries about the topics which are published on the site. He is working on a project which aims to organize mini-conferences, via Skype, to clarify doubts and share knowledge about underground water.

Part of the material has been transferred into a Wikipedia-style dictionary of the geo-sciences (http://www.dicionario.pro.br/). At the moment, the range of articles is rather small, but many article are very substantial. Overall, the number of contributors is small (13 registered users, 1 administrator) but the potential of the project is large.

Projeto Software Livre Bahia – Ciência Livre
twiki.im.ufba.br/bin/view/PSL/CienciaLivre

This is an experimental project which aims to explore the possibilities of applying the open source software model to the production and development of scientific work and articles, made available under the terms and conditions of Creative Commons licences. The project will be developed by the researchers who are members of the Projeto Software Livre Bahia (FOSS Project Bahia). Initially the site will make available work already published by members of the project. In parallel they will encourage researchers to develop their research projects in a collaborative and integrated way to encourage the effective participation of other researchers in the development of the research.

Arts/Culture

Canto Livre
no website yet

Canto Livre (Free/Open Song) is probably the most ambitious open content/open access project apart from Wikipedia. With support of the ministry of culture, work has started two years ago and it's moving into a beta-phase soon. The project has recently received significant additional funding and likely to accellerate its devlepment pace as an effect of that.

Canto livre will be a p2p network for file-sharing (music, films, texts etc.) facilitated by Creative Commons licences; a portal for sharing cultural content. The Canto Livre project emerged with the aim of creating a convergence space for Brazilian artistic content. From the point of view of researchers and art-lovers, it can be seen as a place where it is possible to find, quickly and easily, much of what has been and is being produced on the Brazilian artistic scene. From the point of view of the artists, it is a simple, safe and egalitarian means of creating, producing, publicising and distributing one's art, without being restricted to the commercial interests of the owners of the scarce means of artistic production, publicity and distribution. From the technological point of view, the Canto Livre project will provide software (client and server) which create a p2p network aimed at the 'traffic' of Brazilian artistic content. This network is standardised on several key concepts: easy-to-find content, control, creation, publicity, interaction, inclusion and convergence.

- Easy-to-find content: as well as using quality metadata for artistic works, searches based on content will be implemented. In the case of music, for example, it will be possible to find music by its words, starting from similar music or query-by-humming;

- Control: it will be possible to track the works available in the network in order to identify cases of piracy or non-compliance with current intellectual property rights laws. Linked to support for Creative Commons licences, this is the first network to provide a certain level of security to artists at the same time as it promotes the rational use of intellectual property rights;

- Creation: the Canto Livre network will provide infrastructure to facilitate the creation of artistic work. For example, there will be a collaborative composition system, and even, in the future, distance rehearsal;

- Publicity: it offers a space for publicising artistic work about different aspects such as for example news about artists, a calendar of shows, sites, competitions, download statistics, a system for criticism about the quality fo the works, radio versions of the most requested or suggested music etc;

- Interaction: people with similar needs will be able to interact in different ways, creating a virtual community. Some of the forms of interaction are chat rooms on different topics, classrooms, instant messaging to specific individuals, discussion forum etc;

- Inclusion: people with a low income will be able to access the network without needing their own personal computer. The Canto Livre software will provide all the functionality for the full use of the network, such as players, media editing software etc. Each registered users will have the right to store the content of their artistic work on the

server, and will be able to use it when and where he or she likes;

- Convergence: the computer will not be the only device used by the Canto Livre network. Smartphones, PDAs and other devices will be able to use the network taking into consideration the limitations of each one. In the long term, the hope is to stimulate the development of similar projects all over the world and finally a global network of artistic content of humanity.

No date for public launch has been set, but the momentum of the project is strong.

Cine Falcatrua
fotolog.net/cinefalcatrua

Cine Falcatrua is an extension project of the Federal University of Espírito Santo in Brazil which aims to rethink the cinematographic industry through the use of digital technologies and to problematise the distribution and exhibition of audiovisual materials through a new media ecology. Cine Falcatrua is a travelling projection room, which uses home-made equipment and obsolete CPUs, datashow, Marshall amplifiers, a white screen and cables, lots of cables, to imitate the workings of a conventional cinematographic circuit. Since the beginning of 2004, it has shown films downloaded from the internet in free weekly sessions, and has already reached a direct audience of more than 7000 people. Cine Falcatrua is a group of artists who, through producing, distributing and showing films, aim to place different media against each other, subverting and strengthening them.

Initially, they showed "pirated" films from the Internet, now they are moving more into an Open Content direction: "At the moment they are running travelling Open Content Shows, with 100% copyleft / cc/ gnu-gpl programming downloaded from the internet. In July 2005 the project began its Open Source Season, the first cinema exhibition season in open source. The open source concept was borrowed from the IT world. In practice, it means that the spectator can see how the system works inside, modify it and contribute to its functioning or even make something completely different based on it! Applied to cinema, this means that everything 'from the content of the programme to the structure of the projection' will be an open/free process, built and altered collectively. Directors and audience are invited to see how the cinema works on the other side, and more than ever, to be part of it." Currently, they are supported by university, which gives some stability to the project.

Re:combo
www.recombo.art.br

Re:combo is a collective which was set up in Brazil in 2001 and is made up of musicians, software developers, DJs, teachers, journalists and artists who together use peer-to-peer software and re-sampling as a means of expression through software, installations and live events. 3 points guide the work of Re:combo: a) encouragement of 'intellectual generosity' b) the redefinition of the role of the artist within industry c) dialogue with the public/audience, as the creative agent for the work.

Re:combo can be thought of both as an exception and as signifying a broader trend. They are exceptional because a) they are explicitly a distributed collective, b) wrote their own "open

content license" and c) have significant international exposure. They signify a broader trend is as much that an increasing number of musicians in Brazil, particularly in the region of Recife (where Re:combo originated), are experimenting with variants of open content approaches.

Olinda: Cultura Livre
no website yet

Olinda: Cultura Livre (Olinda: Open/Free Culture) is a collaboration between the Prefeitura Municipal de Olinda (Municipal Government of the city of Olinda in north-east Brazil), the Fundação Getúlio Vargas FGV-RJ (Getulio Vargas Foundation in Rio de Janeiro) and the TV VIVA production company with the aim of encouraging artists and cultural producers to make their work available through Creative Commons licences.

At the moment, this project is just starting and no content has yet been released, but what makes this project significant is the involvement of the regional government and it's ability to provide long-term support and credibility, as well as its own content.

TramaVirtual
www.tramavirtual.com.br, www.tramavirtual.com

Tramavirtual has been created by Trama, a large independent record label in Brazil. The site is a very large online 'community' for the creation of homepages for bands, with distribution of MP3s. The site offers daily news about the independent music scene in Brazil. It currently hosts more than 21'000 musicians providing more than 55'000 songs, downloadable as unencrypted mp3 files. It's very slick, professional and requires Microsoft software. While there is nothing on the site in general regarding open content (or licenses in general), some bands (hard to say how much of a percentage this constitutes) release their material under a creativecommons license.

Open Content in India

Internet Access in India

As of late 2005, India has close to 40 million internet users, which makes it the country with the 5th largest online population. However, given the size of its overall population of somewhat over 1 billion people, this amounts to not even 4% of all citizens.[3] In comparison, China's user rate is about double.

Internet use reflects the extremly stratified structure of life in India, comprising central hubs of the global high-tech economy as well as destitute villages, where even the most basic technological and cultural conditions necessary to provide access are lacking. Over the last 5 years, the number internet users rose by almost 700%, reflecting both the extremely low level at the beginning of the decade, and the dynamism of the development since then. By now, the English-speaking middle and upper classes are well connected either at the office/university or at home, and through various means, such as commercial internet shops and developmental projects, the range people with access to the internet is constantly growing.

The Overall Situation of Open Content in India

There is no open content movement in India, there is very little tradition of collaborative content production, and there is also very little awareness in the arts, educational and NGO sector that collaborative content production might be of relevance to them. This has numerous reasons. For example, straight-forward unauthorized distribution of content in the so-called gray markets is thriving making copy-right enforcement hard to reach into everyday life. In effect, most people are not really affected in a perceptible way by the expansion of copyright laws and technical control measures in a way that is comparable to Western countries. Consequently, there has been very little public debate about these issue outside small, specialized circles. Even in the area that effects people, and Indian industry most directly, the issue of patents and generic drugs, there has been very little public discussion about recent legislative changes. Thus, non-commercial creators have very little need to deal with these abstract issues. Slowly, this is changing. Documentary film makers are feeling attempts of copyright holders to enforce their rights more strictly and with more commercial interests. They are increasingly asked now to pay for music they use in their films. This is new.

Thus, the discussion of open content licenses appears in India as a solution looking for a problem. According to Lawrence Liang, Alternative Law Forum Bangalore, this is likely to change over the next couple of years, as the expansion of copyright enforcement is set to affect day-to-day life of creators in India as well, but for now, this has barely happened. What has happened, though, is that many NGOs, as for as they are dealing with these issues at all, have been exposed to, and adopted, a mainstream view on IP., Thus they increasingly come to regard their information as their key "asset" with a need to protect and market it, leading them even further away from collaborative production. This is not to say that there are not any projects that constitute open content, or at least have an affinity to it, but most of them are

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3   http://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm

marginal or more geared towards making hard-to access information functionally public.

Open Content Projects

Reference/Education/Activism

Wikipedia
http://kn.wikipedia.org/wiki/, http://hi.wikipedia.org/wiki/
There are two Indian-language wikipedia projects, one in Hindi, one in Kannada. Both are very small, with barely more than 1000 articles, ranking as 83rd, and 82nd, in terms of size of all Wikipedia projects. This reflects both the aforementioned lack of awareness concerning the projects and, by extension, the general culture of open content, and, one can assume, the high English literacy among internet users, making it more attractive to consult and contribute to the English language Edition than to the local ones.

Mumbai Free Map
http://freemap.in/
At the moment, only a demo and a project description exist. It's main aim is to make information about land use in the city of Mumbai available to the public, thus removing the information differentials between (poor) city dwellers and the developers. As the project organizers write, "this asymmetry of information has given rise to predatory classes of builders and speculators, whose privileged access to information is transformed into "development rights" for construction, eroding accountability to local communities and urban stake-holders, and the planning policies meant to uphold their rights."

The project is headed by CRIT (Collective Research Initiatives Trust), a group of architects, scholars, technicians and artists who have worked together over the past seven years in Mumbai. The collective was established in early 2003 with the aim of undertaking research, pedagogy and intervention on urban spaces and contemporary cultural practices in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

While at the moment, the project is focussed on providing access to public information in a way that is useful to the general public, this clear that the infrastructure can also be used for all kinds of user-supplied geographic information and the collaboration with other open mapping projects is a indication of the interest to move to this direction.

It is probably the project with the most open content potential.

ALF Publications
http://www.altlawforum.org/PUBLICATIONS
"ALF (alternative law forum) was started in March, 2000, by a collective of lawyers with the belief that there was a need for an alternative practice of law. We recognize that a practice of law is inherently political. We are committed to a practice of law which will respond to issues of social and economic injustice." Since then, ALF as become one of the main hubs in the

discursive and advocacy networks in India developing alternative approach to copyright (and other legal areas of less concern in the present context). It has also gained significant international reputation. All its publications are published as copyleft, with the only requirement the provision of proper credit. In addition, ALF is running numerous email lists, creating important public discussion and information-sharing spaces for professionals in this area.

Sarai Readers
http://www.sarai.net
Sarai is a new media initiative, a space for research, practice and conversation about the contemporary media and urban constellations, funded in 2000 and located in New Delhi. The Sarai Reader is published once a year. The first, Sarai Reader 01: On the Public Domain was published in February 2001. Each issue is structured around a specific theme, and will feature scholarly articles, essays, reviews & criticism, interviews and photographic essays. The Reader is inter-disciplinary and invites and commissions writing by practitioners, academics, activists and artists working. The Reader, in particular, supports new writing from the South Asian Region, with a view to creating a climate of rigorous critical discussion around media practice and theory and urban popular culture in South Asia.

All readers, and most other material from Sarai, is published under a creative commons license and can be downloaded and distributed electronically.

Alike ALF, Sarai is one of the main nodes in the discursive networks dealing with open content issues in India. It's main focus is the history and theory of artistic/cultural practices, in the specific context of Indian urban life.

While Sarai runs a series of projects in which they are working together with the local population, its publications aim primarily at highly-educated, international publics.

Solutionsexchange
http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/index.htm
Solution Exchange is a new initiative of the United Nations Country Team in India that offers communities of development practitioners a UN-sponsored space where they can provide and benefit from each other's solutions to the day-to-day challenges they face. Their goal is to connect people who share similar concerns and interests, bringing them together virtually and face-to-face towards the common objective of problem-solving. As they explain to prospective members: "as a member of one of our communities, you can proceed with the confidence that you are not reinventing the wheel. Communities are organized around selected development targets of both India's Tenth Five-Year Plan as well as the globally mandated Millennium Development Goals, contributing to their successful achievement. Members come from all organizations - government, NGOs, development partners, private sector, academia - interacting on an ongoing basis, building trust and strengthening their identity as a group."

In practice, solutionsexchange is an enhanced bulletin-board where dicussions are organized in thematic areas. Currently there are 9 areas, ranging from AIDS to Poverty. Its audience are NGOs and other practitioners, or, as they call it, communities of practice in developmental

work. While this is not open content, it's aim of trying to create flat hierarchies and communication among distributed practitioners on the ground, rather than give solely voice to established experts, is very close to the culture of open content.

Docpost
www.doccentre.org/
The Center for Education and Documentation(CED) in Mumbai and Bangalore is one of India's most important documentation centers. It's mission is "to excel as an information organization on social and development issues, and make available to NGOs and other organizations and individuals in civil society, information and analysis on all emerging and latent issues which affect the interest of the marginalized." They are also one of the first groups to speak of freedom of information, free software etc before this became fashionable. They bring out a compilation called doc post which is licensed on copyleft terms. Their substantial library, which is partly accessible only, is for members only, due to legal restrictions. The membership fees are nominal.

While most of the material they provide access to is by third parties (news clippings etc), and the books they produce seem only available in printed form under standard copyright, the general aim of the CED, of making information widely available to professional audiences non-commercially is very compatible with open content.

Nalsar Tech: Technology and Law Forum
http://www.nalsartech.org/
According to the self-description "the Technology and Law Forum (TLF) is a proposal to devote some critical thought to the interfaces between law and technology. Broadly, we seek to inquire into the impact of the application of law to technologies of various kinds. Reciprocally, we are also looking to explore ways in which technology can be imported as an aid to the functioning of law. Our forays may be categorized under two heads. Firstly, by organizing periodic workshops and conferences on our various research themes we aim to educate ourselves as well as raise awareness levels about techno-legal issues. Secondly, by offering paid research services to law firms, government departments, companies and NGOs alike, we would endeavor to cultivate a pool of practical-minded law students."

While the site itself stands under a CC license, there is actually very little published content on it, contrary to the ALF site.

Indian Labour Archives
http://www.indialabourarchives.org/
Collects material to the history of the working class in India. Most material is on paper, and accessible locally, the site does offer a search feature, but this is not functional. While the site has no explicit copyright policy, the culture of the organization is very close, to, at least, open access and free redistribution.

Shared Footage
http://www.onlinevolunteers.org/gujarat/action/volunteers/dispatches/sfg120902.htm
After the Gujarat riots (2002), a group local documentary film makers issued a call to collect

audiovisual material on the events, as a resource base for people who wanted to do media work related to it. The idea was that this resource could help raise awareness about the devastation caused by the earthquake by making it easier to producers to access relevant material. About 250 hours of material where collected, and make accessible in two locations, in Mumbai and in Delhi. Over one hundred people have taken part in this project.

The project made the material available to anyone interested, though this being a politically very sensitive topic, it was clear that the material would be released with a normative clause, so that it could not be used to promote hate speech.

The project was one of the most explicit open content projects in India, with a clear idea to pool resources and forgo individual ownership. The urgent needs to the situation were strong and a motivating factor. However, it's long-term impact has been small, only two documentaries where produced based on this material. This has several reasons. One, the focus of the resource pool was very specific, the Gujarat riots in early 2002, so that it did not appeal to anyone with a different interest. Second, the efforts to transcribe and code the material in way that would make it useful to users, who did not have the time to search through the full archive, was too great. Third, the material was made accessible only locally, rather than also online, limiting the number of people who could screen /use it. The main reason for this was a) that in 2002, video on the internet was not really very common and b) the limited funds of the project. Finally, with the waning of the interest in the events, the group started to fall apart. The project is now dormant.

Nevertheless, this is one of the most important projects, where cultural creators came together to develop a common pool of resources, from which they could all draw. While the rationale for doing so was convincing, and appealing to numerous contributors, the difficulties maintaining such a project over the long term have become visible.

There are a few other open content oriented documentary film projects, which either make their films available under a cc license (for example, Pedestrian Pictures, in South India), or which make also their raw footage available (for example, "Outside Mercy" a film on Tsunami relief effort).

Culture/Arts

There are now a few individual artists and music bands releasing their work under CC licenses, and their range likely to expand in the future. So far, one of the very few groups looking at open content not just as a release strategy, but also a production paradigm is Sarai (see above) through various projects sponsored through them. Sarai has also supported the development of a collaborative platform (http://www.opuscommons.net/) and a successor, apna opus (http://apnaopus.var.cc/wiki/index.php/Main_Page). Both are very ambitious, state-of-art platforms that have generated international interest. The actual use of these platforms has been limited, though, partly because of the technical difficulties of using them, partly because of general difficulties of collaborative artistic production, where the need to collaborate is often less pressing, and the difficulties of creating a shared projects are more pronounced, due

to the, perhaps, more subjective nature of the work (as compared to, say, software development).

Blogs

In the last two years, blogs have come very popular in India (like in many other countries). The heterogeneity is as wide as everywhere, but the most interesting development is the emergence of "issue-blogs" and "community-blogs", where the ease of use blogging software, often made available through commercial providers, such as the blogger.com, or the Indian providers sulekha.com. There are also an increasing number of social events for/by bloggers, from local f2f meetings to awards for the best Indian blogs (http://indibloggies.org/). In the following, I will list just two as examples for issue blogs.

Law and Other Thing

http://lawandotherthings.blogspot.com/

"Blog About Indian Law, the Courts, and the Constitution" a joint blog by 8 people, some students, some practicing lawyers, some in India, some outside of it, who write their personal commentary and analysis on legal matters in India, and beyond. One of the persons involved in this group blog, also runs his personal blog on similar matters (http://spicyipindia.blogspot.com/).

Tsunami Help India

http://tsunamihelpindia.blogspot.com/

"Information on lost people, request for contributions, relief requirements, volunteer request, or just about anything that's related to the Tsunami disaster."

This blog, which ran only from December 2004, to February 2005, but is part of the broader still active effort on http://tsunamihelp.blogspot.com/, which also includes many contributors from India.

There are (in)numerous other examples of blogs, nor networks of blogs, devoted to public interest, social justice, development issues, often intermixed with personal opinion. While open content, or publication licenses, seem to be of minor concern to many of them (there are so many that it's hard to make quantitative assessments), overall, their practice, like blogs everywhere, does constitute some kind of collaborative production, where citation and cross-references are an essential aspect of the culture.

Open Content in South East and Eastern Europe

local research by: Branka Curcic, kuda.org

Introduction

Access to the internet varies widely throughout the region. In Slovenia, the most advanced country, internet penetration is close to 50%, which is about the EU average. In Estonia, which has a very active policy in promoting digital literacy, it's even slightly higher. In Serbia and Montenegro, on the other hand, it's only 14%, in Bosnia less than 5% and in Albania not even 3%. However, in most cities and towns, there are numerous Internet cafes (for tourists and locals), so in terms of pure access and occasional use, the numbers are likely to be higher.[4]

Having emerged from communist rule after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and, in the Balkans, gone through wars during the 1990s, the ideas of free sharing and open collaboration do not resonate well in the general culture. Raw capitalism and a culture of "getting rich quick", particularly in the countries less integrated into the EU, are dominant. Notions of large-scale community are often tainted by nationalism, which is predominantly hostile to notions of open content (except, perhaps, in nordic countries like Estonia). Public universities tend to have very little interest in such projects and ministries of culture and/or education are active in supporting at least some initiatives only in the more developed countries in the region.

Nevertheless, the CreativeCommons project has been localized for Slovenia and Croatia, and efforts are underway in Romania and the Ukraine and early project leads exist in other countries.

The context most receptive to the ideas and practices has been the experimental art context. It is indicative that 13 out of 19 projects fall into the category of arts and culture. Of central importance are the numerous media centers that exist throughout the region, most importantly Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, but also in Estonia and other places. Most of these centers, which tend to be very well connected internationally, support numerous open content projects, and, in the case of the Multimedia Institute in Zagreb, and, perhaps soon kuda.org in Novi Sad, are even carrying the local CreativeCommons project. However, given the focus on experimental cultures, the reach of these projects tends to be fairly small. Nevertheless, they do very important work in raising local awareness and providing seeds for a culture of open content.

Of course, there are exceptions to these general tendencies. In the wake of the international success of the Wikipedia, numerous editions from SEE Europe are thriving, most notably the Polish edition. However, in case where language politics are complicated, most importantly in Ex-Yugoslavia, the Wikipedia projects are seriously affected by it. Another important exception is Women's Information Technology Transfer (WITT) a project that aims to increase technology literacy among Women in the region using open source software and promoting a culture of open content. This project is successful partly because it is part of a larger European and North American initiative, and partly because its focus very concrete and practical.

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4   Statistics are from 2005, see http://www.internetworldstats.com/

Educational Material

Women's Information Technology Transfer (WITT)
www.witt-project.net
Women's Information Technology Transfer (WITT) is a portal site to link women's organizations and feminist advocates for the internet in Eastern and Central Europe. It provides ICTs strategic information to all, and is a cooperative support effort for Central and Eastern European women to develop ICT as an instrument in their social activism. WITT was initiated in 2002 by ENAWA – European North American Women Action as part of its training program. Its main seat is in Croatia and has established Focal Points throughout the region. Focal Points are women working within organizations who represent WITT and organize local WITT trainings. Financed by wide range of foundations, public institutions and individuals, it is fully operational, working throughout the region and very focused on open source. It is one of the few initiatives combining ideas of open source with feminism.

kuda.read
kuda.org/e_kudaread.htm
kuda.read is the publishing project initiated by New Media Center_kuda.org, from Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro. This publishing project is dedicated to the exploration of critical approach to new media culture and technology, new social, cultural and artistic relations. Since the inception of the series in 2004, six books have been published in print and made available online under an Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license.

GNU Spectrum
www.gnupauk.org/EnglishGnuSpectrum
GNU Spectrum is a small open online texts base, supporting the selection of texts to be published as a reader (in book form and on a CD-ROM). GNU Spectrum is a collection of essays inspired by the Free Software movement which, with its collaborative model of production, increasingly can act, among others, as a successful alternative to the Microsoft monopoly on the OS market. Tomislav Medak and Marcell Mars, mi2, Zagreb have made the intial selection. The project seems to have received only limited input from others.

Art/Culture

New Media Center_kuda.org

kuda.org

kuda.org, started in 2000, is a non-profit organization of artists, theorists, media activists and researchers in the field of ict (information and communication technologies). It explores critical approaches towards (mis)using of ict and emphasizes creative rethinking of issue affecting the network society. Activity of kuda.org is focused on raising questions on how electronic media influence society and creative use of new communication technologies and

how they influence contemporary cultural and social policy. Free Software and Open Content are a focal point of kuda.org's activities. Founded mainly through international foundations and collaborations, kuda.org has established itself as the main hub of open culture in Serbia, and is widely recognized beyond.

Multimedia Institute, mi2
mi2.hr
Multimedia Institute, founded in 1999, is a non profit organization from Zagreb - CROATIA, working predominantly in the fields of new media culture, digital technology R&D&D(research/development/deployment), social activism and cultural management (networking, policy and advocacy). Multimedia Institute is structured through a complex set of interacting modules, with physical spaces: net.culture club MaMa (public space) & mi2lab (production space), groups like: mama-djs & pastforward (theory group), projects like: EGOBOO.bits (free media publishing label) & mi2's annual exhibitions. It also serves as the regional coordinator of CreativeCommons for Croatia. Supported by local, national governments and international foundations, mi2 has turned into the main hub of open content activities in Croatia, and is widely known beyond.

Cyberpipe
www.kiberpipa.org/
Cyberpipe (Kiberpipa) is a web platform and physical space in Ljubljana. In their laboratory, Cyberpipe team develops new usage of new media, media archive; they revitalize used computer equipment and support development of a cybernetic culture. Through interaction with artists, scientists, media activists, they develop creative, critical approaches to new technologies. Their main goal is raising of media literacy in Slovenia. Cyberpipe's slogan is "all our code are belong to you", which is paraphrase of the quotation from a computer game meaning that they enable free flow of information.

EGOBOO.bits
www.egoboobits.net
GOBOO.bits, started in 2001, is a publishing project and production collective dealing with free software development, sound production, and mediatheory. It is a project by the Multimedia Institute and net.culture centre MaMa from Zagreb, Croatia. The lowest common denominator of the entire EGOBOO.bits production is GNU General Public Licence. EgoBOO.bits currently publishes about 25 authors, mainly electronic musicians from Croatia, and has had about 170 releases so far. It has also conducted workshops and running a free software platform for the free exchange of works. The educational part of the project is founded by the various branches of the government and also by European initiatives.

Superprivate, platforma 9.81
www.platforma981.hr/
PLATFORMA 9,81 was created in 1999 in Zagreb as a reaction to the inability of the architectural scene to establish an interdisciplinary and open dialog within the scene and externally in regard to the problems of urban space culture, digitalization of the environment, influences of globalization to the perception of space and the needs of new educational

methods in architecture today. Their projects have a profoundly public quality and regularly draw together a large number of people from different domains of life. Their relation to architecture and urban planning is marked by an informal approach, non-institutional strategies of action, tendency towards research and away from habitual practice. "Superpublic, Superprivate" is their first publication published under the Creative Commons licence.

Financed through local and national governments, with support from the university and international foundations, superprivate has established itself as important node of innovative discourse and projects.

ColumnNetwork, Architectural Collaboration Network
columnnetwork.org
ColumnNetwork, started in 2005, is a small network of architecture students and new media researches interested in the failed of collaboration, visual collaboration, open source, locative media and social publishing. Their projects are results of their collaborative investigation. They have realized two projects so far: Nazitracker is web service that enables classification of the degree of nationalism of the individual or institution, precisely determines their geographic location at geo-coded map of the region and the bigger urban centres and enables interaction on the map with the registered users via RSS chanells. Second project is "LOCATION BASED COMMUNICATION NETWORK", Model for location based collaborative, communication and data share environment for social interaction in urban areas. They've created a geocoded vector based city map and to connect it with a multiuser, multiblog platform, letting people to create a location embedded blog directly from the map. While the project is relatively small, it's a rare example of a collaborative cultural project in Serbia, with some influence of kuda.org.

Artservis
www.artservis.org
Artservis, started in 2001, is a web tool for artists, producers, gallerists, cultural managers and administrators, students, professors, social scientists ..., operating in the field of contemporary arts. It offers: - current and archived information on funding sources, opportunities for creative and professional collaboration, and educational programmes (Database, Links); - weekly dispatches of new entries or changes on the entire web site (Newsletter). Artservis is openly accessible and free of charge. It supports independent and competent operation of individuals and organizations in the field of contemporary arts. Its main goal is to enhance the availability of relevant information. The enhancement is based on two main principles: solidarity sharing of information and copyleft policy. Artservis is a project of SCCA-Ljubljana. It has both pages in Slovenian and English language. It is fully operational, updated daily with over 3000 cultural workers signed up at least for the regular newsletter.

Informator

info.ljudmila.org

Informator is platform created in 2000 by Ljudmila, Ljubljana Digital Media Lab, dedicated to critiques and reflections in the area of sound, image, video, information technologies, art, civil sector, etc. in Slovenian language. The project is collaborative news sites, with member and

anonymous submissions, and even though the project officially ended in 2004, the site is still very much in use with several new posts daily. The site is still maintained Ljudmila.

04 megazine
04zine.org/index.php
04 megazine, based in Croatia, has subtitle "the magazine for reality hacking". 04 megazine is the fanzine that is dealing with issues of globalization, global media, (anti) capitalism, new media, tactical media, music, film, activism, art, digital human rights, self-organizing, etc. from the world and the region of South-East Europe. It has a large website published under Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike 2.5 License.

Krtaca
www.krtaca.si
Krtaca, which was started in 2005, is the blog arranged for fast exchange of the information, mostly about "political ecology", nationalism in Slovenia, critical theory and other political and social themes relevant to a left-wing cultural scene. It has sub categories like "revija" (revue) is, containing posted news, from Slovenia and the world, but also news which are taken over from B92 web site, from Guerrilla News Network, Indymedia and progressive.org. Other sub categories are forum, critic, theory, reviews, etc.

It references CreativeCommons in Slovenia, but does not properly license its material.

RIXC/NET RADIO Archive
rixc.lv/radio/index.html
RIXC/NET RADIO, started in 2000, is Internet based audio archive and one of the projects of RIXC - The Centre for New Media Culture, Riga, Latvia. The aim of the centre is to bridge the traditional gap between 'high' and popular culture and the divisions between various youth, sub- and minority cultures. The RIXC intends to become a meeting place for different types of culture on local and international scale. Project RIXC/NET RADIO has its online free archive of different audio materials (lectures, artistic/dj performances, documentation of symposiums) from the field of new media culture, art and science, locative and streaming media, etc.
The project is supported by the Ministry of Culture.

Open CV
www.eastwood-group.org/
Open CV is basically small open art project by collaborative group called "Eastwood - Real Time Strategy Group", which is dedicated to the strategic research of relations between information technology and cultural practice. Eastwood usually deals with computer games and their dismantling into creative, social and political analysis. They have created two computer games so far - Explorer 98 and Civilization IV - and have participated at many exhibitions, conferences and workshops. Their idea is to offer this list of all exhibitions/conferences/workshops they took part into, in fact CV of the group, to young artists who have never participated at any international event, who can take it over as their own, accommodate it, change it and present her/him self as the member of the group.

OpenDesignLibrary
OpenDesignLibrary is a project that aims to provide a repository/library for free graphic design

images, samples, templates for creating graphic design using Creative Commons licenses for its selected content. The aim is to built a community of designers sharing free design templates as well as design information, helping to make the world a prettier place! The project is currently in its preparatory phase, no set launch date.

Reference Work / News

Internodium
www.internodium.org
Internodium, started in 1999, is a platform used by local Internet community in Serbia and the region. In first few years, Internodium mailing list has been mostly dedicated to documenting of cases of restraint of Internet access and of censorship of the content of students groups, individuals, independent journalists and independent media. After political changes in 2000, list's focus becomes tracking and discussion around current questions of development policies and implementation of ICT in Serbia and Montenegro. Supported by the Center for Internet Development and with some 600 people subscribed to the mailing list, and more than 13000 visits to the website per months, Internodium is the main open forum for exchanging information on regional ICT policy issues, it is closely connected to the open source community.

Wikipedias
Wikipedia in ex Yugoslav countries reflects the state of non-communication and growth of nationalists feelings in many ways. There are Wikipedias in Serbian (Cyrillic), Croatian, Serbo-Croatian (ex Yugoslav official language, which now doesn't exist), Bosnian (all those languages are phonetically very similar), Macedonian and Slovenian language (which is leading with over 17.000 entries). Each of those platforms are starting from the very beginning with forming the entries and motivating people to join, not communicating with other, neighboring platforms. It seems that here national entities are taking advantage over general need for sharing of knowledge and cooperation. Or creating common platform in this area would be just too nostalgic. Recently, however, there discussions have begun about merging some of them, but so far, nothing has happened.

In other countries, where language politics are less problematic, the development of Wikipedia closely reflects the general development civil society in that the country and the size of its population. The Polish edition is doing very well, in fact, it's the fourth largest of all Wikipedias (230'000 articles). Also notable are the Romanian edition (33'000), the Slovak one (32'000), the Hungarian and Czech edition (29'000 each), Bulgarian (25'000), and the Lithuanian and Estonian ones (16-17'000).

Hot Russian line
hotrussianline.media-activist.ru/
"Hot Russian line" was a short-term to bring information on current problems & questions of social movements in Russia to the international audience, artistically using the concept of tactical television. The project is made in a form of five video-clips dedicated to key social topics which are: leftist movement, illegal immigration, IT development, 1st Russian Social Forum and a look from Russia at Ukraine and its orange revolution. The clips were released

gradually during April 2005. Each clip is followed by its text transcription and a forum, on which everyone could ask questions or discuss these issues for a short period of time. All material is released under "anti-copyright" and "no rights reserved", yet there is still a link to CreativeCommons (which no longer works).