

Introduction

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The Internet¹ and its impact on Latin American and Caribbean society: Research and dialogue

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Introduction

Globalization is a process of aesthetic, cultural and economic change, characterized by a series of complex phenomena at both the global and the local levels – for example, there is an ongoing reconfiguration of the functions of states as the principal players in social policy and as the wielders of sovereign jurisdiction within their territories. Other phenomena that characterize the globalization context are the explosion of old patterns of government organization into an infinite number of national expressions and the growing role of large transnational enterprises as their international capital base expands.²

In parallel with this reshaping of international power relationships, in which the nation-state has yielded to a dominant order based on the disproportionate accumulation of wealth among the business elites of the so-called developed world, new social actors are appearing (women's movements, indigenous movements, youth movements, human rights organizations, etc.) as the expression of a struggle to enforce respect for their individual and collective rights through new concepts for reconstituting their identities and reshaping power relationships at the local and regional levels. These groups are seeking a more equitable social model, in the face of the obviously unjust distribution of material and symbolic goods and the state's abandonment of its leading role in social policies.

We may summarize these ideas of globalization as representing a new field of competition in which two different currents and philosophies collide: on one hand, the spreading imposition of a system governed by large transnational consortia and based on the principles of accumulation, utility, efficiency and productivity, and on the other hand, the resistance of local cultures and groups which, by actively reinventing their identities and ways of life, are striving to adapt and survive in the face of this dominant pattern. This process, at once global and local, tends to weaken national sovereignty, specifically that of developing countries, and to promote the concentration of wealth and knowledge among the elites of industrialized countries.³

All of these global and local phenomena are occurring in parallel with the gradual widening of the gap between rich and poor countries, between the rich elites and the impoverished majorities of countries that are classified, by agencies addressing the poverty problem, as poor or underdeveloped.⁴

This gap is not solely economic, and it cannot be measured adequately by indices of income per capita: it is also a symbolic divide, characterized by an unequal distribution of knowledge and of cultural goods that are essential for an individual, culture or society to act and survive in a globalized and highly competitive society. José Bengoa(1999: 24–25) speaks of the current distribution of cultural goods (in particular, education) in the following terms:

If the distribution of income is in general unsatisfactory, at both the international and the national levels, we must say that the distribution of knowledge is even worse. While the ratio between the lowest and highest quintiles internationally is 0.007 to 92.40 in terms of income distribution, a rough calculation using UNESCO data shows that expenditure on education per student in the lowest quintile is 0.001, compared to a concentration of educational expenditure of 95.5 in rich countries.

This gap between worlds, regions, countries and groups of people takes on complex dimensions because of persistent tendencies towards cultural exclusion, through ethnic, racial, gender⁵ or generational segregation. The consequence of this new global model of inequality and exclusion makes itself felt in the inability of marginal social groups and segments to participate in society.

The new information and communication technologies (ICTs), especially the Internet, which are growing at a pace unprecedented in human history,⁶ are part, and indeed strategic instruments, of this inequitable concentration of symbolic and material incomes at the world level. Cyberspace and its “Web” constitutes a field that stimulates the unequal and inequitable exchanges that characterize the present-day world of globalization and exclusion;⁷ the selective distribution of this tool and its language produces and deepens the symbolic and material gap referred to above.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, use of this technology has spread widely in geographic terms, but it is of benefit only to specific groups: the national and regional elites.⁸ Thus, the first problem that the Internet poses in Latin America is that of equity: how to employ it as an instrument that has the potential to generate “equitable” exchanges of knowledge that will benefit the great majority of the population.

This situation of cultural exclusion points to the need for research into the social impact of the Internet within the cycles of cultural and economic production and consumption in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region in which we find, at the same time, the selective spread of the Internet, massive growth in the consumption of symbolic products or their messages via television, and steady impoverishment among the people, characterized by sharply declining incomes.⁹ From this viewpoint, research into the social

impact of ICTs is useful for shedding light on the design and implementation of public policies relating to communications and Internet culture that will seek to reverse the dynamics and realities of cultural and material exclusion that characterize the region.

This is the historical context in which the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO, Ecuador) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada) decided to sponsor in July 1999 a competition for research projects on the social impacts of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Latin America and the Caribbean. This initiative led to the selection¹⁰ within the region of eight research projects on the social impact of ICTs in four priority development areas: (1) education and culture, (2) democracy and citizenship, (3) law and justice, and (4) methodologies for evaluating the social impact of the Internet.¹¹ All of these themes stress the problem of equity and the need to close the technological and socioeconomic gaps that have traditionally excluded certain rural and urban groups in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This introductory paper does not attempt to summarize or describe the eight winning projects. We have focused on a limited number of critical issues¹² common to all the research projects and articles that make up this book and that are vital for the study and design of public policies for communication and Internet culture consistent with the principle of social and cultural equity.

The reader will have the opportunity to learn about the eight research projects in the main body of this book, which also includes contributions from six specialists¹³ on Internet copyright issues, public policies relating to the Internet, a proposed franchising system for telecentres and an analysis of experience with the MISTICA virtual community in building an equitable and socially responsible Internet culture.

In the first part of this paper, entitled "The instrumental view of technology and the construction of a new *habitus* for the flow of knowledge", we contrast Internet practices that were identified in school projects (based on case studies from Chile and Colombia) and in governance at the municipal level (based on case studies from Buenos Aires, Montevideo and the Chilean towns of El Bosque, Puente Alto, Los Andes and Rancagua) with the concept of the Internet as a new symbolic field for the flow and exchange of cultural capital and as a system for distributing signs and symbols (knowledge) through an innovative education initiative (introduction of the Internet in the school system of Pinamar, Argentina), as well as the establishment of the MISTICA virtual community.

In the second theme for consideration, entitled "The Internet, a space for reproducing the dominant order and the emergence of new cultural propositions", we examine how the logic underlying traditional uses, viewpoints and power relationships is reproduced by introducing ICTs into schools and by experiments in local governance (analyzed in the case studies referred to above). We also look at the tensions that arise between this

dominant philosophy and the emergence of a new way of representing and constructing social relationships mediated by the Internet, a contradictory dynamic that poses the principal challenges for managers of ICT projects and policies, in terms of incorporating them creatively into local spaces and cultures as a language and instrument for supporting social change. In this analysis, we include a case study that addresses the incorporation of ICTs into the schools of two communities (Tanti and Zapala) in Argentina.

Under the third theme, entitled “Challenges in building a fair and equitable legal framework for the Internet in Latin America and the Caribbean”, we consider the importance of reinforcing the “right to communication and culture” and “Internet rights”, as a starting point for the strategic changes that are needed in the juridical frameworks of Latin America and the Caribbean consistent with the construction of an Internet culture that respects personal and collective rights. We focus on the issue of ICTs in relation to the individual’s right to privacy, problems of copyright law, and the right to communication as the foundation of a system of community telecentres.

The conclusion of this paper, entitled “The Internet: an environment and a tool for building a new political culture”, presents some ideas about the need to promote alliances among civil society organizations, the academic world, government and the private sector, as a way to build an information society based on freedom of communication, citizen participation and collective access to knowledge. These ideas are the central thread of the conclusion.

The instrumental view of technology and the construction of a new *habitus* for the flow of knowledge

A common finding of researchers who have examined the social impact of the Internet on schools as well as on the notions of citizenship and governance is the predominant tendency to make use of this tool in a merely “instrumental” or “technical” way, thereby losing sight of its potential as a language and system of representation through which young people and citizens create and recreate relationships and their visions of themselves and of society (see José Cabrera Paz on “The conceptual focus”). The predominant approach today neglects the social dimension and function of ICTs as part of the processes of producing, consuming and distributing knowledge.

Miguel Angel Arredondo, in his research report on “Introducing new information and communication technologies in two rural schools of central Chile” (see discussion on “the school routine and the use of ICTs”), argues that this lack of integration is reflected in the ritual practices that school authorities insist on as compulsory rules for students wanting to use computers (e.g. requiring children to cover their shoes with plastic bags before entering the computer room, and the steps they must take, turning off the equipment, covering it up, etc.). These habits reflect a view that makes the computer something sacrosanct, while in effect reducing it to just one more technical

tool within the school system. He notes that priority is given to technical training (which converts the computer into a simple database tool) rather than stressing its potential as an instrument for communication and creativity.

José Cabrera, in his study of cultural practices with the Internet among school students in Bogota, describes in detail the failure to integrate the Internet into school life and how its functions have been reduced to those of a conventional school encyclopaedia (see his “The crisis of administered knowledge”), which merely perpetuates conventional teaching methods and learning approaches (such as slavishly memorizing texts without an investigative and critical mindset), frustrating efforts to encourage more participatory and creative learning. Reducing ICTs to a tool in this way loses sight of their potential for fostering new relationships, new teaching methods and new forms of communication and learning.

We find similar phenomena in terms of the instrumental use of the Internet in experiments with introducing ICTs at the local government level. The research team headed by Susana Finkelievich, which examined experiments for incorporating ICTs into local government in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, shows how the Internet has played only a very conventional role in disseminating information, as a kind of newsletter “promoting traditional governance”, without attempting to foster a culture of citizen participation or “cyber citizenship” (see their “Does Buenos Aires have electronic government?”).

Uca Silva, in a study on the social impact of new ICTs in the Chilean towns of El Bosque, Puente Alto, Los Andes and Rancagua, shows how the introduction of ICTs in these towns has merely served the internal needs of local governments to improve their political information or marketing services (see Silva on “The relationship between the municipality and the community”).

As we can see, the instrumental approach to using ICTs is the predominant one, both in the school system and in local government, and it fails to appreciate the Internet as a new language or system of representation and communication: learning to use it requires the transmission of cultural or symbolic capital that will empower citizens and allow them to appropriate this strategic tool.¹⁴

The predominance of the instrumental view of the Internet as a tool divorced from the context of cultural change, power relationships and changes in symbolic systems and the circulation of knowledge¹⁵ means that we must develop and use new approaches, methodologies and teaching methods in order to make social use of ICTs. Particularly noteworthy in this regard is the work of the team from the National University of Quilmes, coordinated by Ester Schiavo, which set out to create a new *habitus*¹⁶ for the citizen, i.e. new ways of perceiving, acting and participating in society through the innovative use of ICTs, by incorporating them into the school system (see their “The network society as a new field”).

Another relevant experiment in this area was conducted by the MISTICA virtual community, managed by Fundación Redes y Desarrollo (FUNREDES,

Dominican Republic), which has attempted to develop a “cyberculture” based on the principles and practices of solidarity and democratic participation among the members of this networking community. We have included a detailed description of this experiment in the present book.

As will be appreciated, there are two conflicting tendencies or approaches when it comes to introducing ICTs in schools or in local governance: the predominant approach, which regards the Internet as a technical tool, versus the approach that seeks to restore its potential as a system of communication and of constructing representations, new forms of learning and social participation. These two tendencies are part of a more complex process in which two currents collide, the one that produces conventional forms of domination or power and the other that subverts that order, as the sign of a new way of learning beyond the traditional education system, a new order that is based outside the school, in spaces where we can see the emergence of new forms of interaction and socialization (see José Cabrera on the “horizontal context”¹⁷). In the next section, we consider how these two currents meet.

The Internet, a space for reproducing the dominant order and the emergence of new cultural propositions

The Internet does not produce change by itself, since it is surrounded by cultural, political and social orders and contexts and, generally, has been converted into an extension of existing power institutions. In the education field, Arredondo shows how the disciplinary system of the school is reproduced through the use of ICT and how this new language or tool is reduced to a means of exerting control and power within the school. The computer classroom becomes a strategic part of the school disciplinary system (e.g. when students are punished by barring them from the room).

On the other hand, this space becomes a point where the teacher loses authority, since the informal dynamics of interchange that it generates between students during computer practice tend to neutralize and diminish the teacher’s capacity to control. In this respect, the virtual classroom is an arena in which students’ playful pursuits collide with teachers’ authority: it is an amorphous, ill-defined field, one without rules or a predetermined structure to order the process of learning and teaching. Arredondo and Cabrera see this failure to incorporate ICTs into school culture as a product of the lack of a comprehensive teaching philosophy, which is just part of the broader issue of bringing about in-depth change in the relationships and methods that apply to teaching and learning.

The virtual classroom, through the computer screen, becomes a way of escaping the teacher’s control. The Internet marks the frontier between experience inside and outside the classroom, inside and outside the educational order. This point of conflict also marks the tension between the book-based culture, conceived as a form of pedagogical relationship and

control over the student, and new forms of learning by navigating in cyberspace, which students pursue outside the school and away from the teacher's control. These practices combine televised codes, sound, reading and chat rooms as a new form of socialization and a way of building new identities (see José Cabrera on the "horizontal context").

This duality between the two opposing currents or philosophies requires a systematic effort at integration and synthesis that will incorporate the language of ICTs into school life and local culture, as part of a meaningful change in conventional teaching and learning methods. On this point, according to the evaluation by the research team coordinated by Paula Pérez and Adriana Vilela of successful experiments in incorporating ICTs into two rural schools in Argentina, success made itself felt in the ability to incorporate the Internet into local community life and to articulate education projects with efforts at improving local governance.

From this perspective, we may conclude that one of the factors for success in building new teaching methods to make use of the Internet depends on incorporating it into the local culture and on the responses that it offers to local needs (see Paula Pérez et al., on "Goal"¹⁸) through using it strategically in accordance with principles that will allow for the horizontal and equitable exchange of knowledge.

The same tension between traditional ways of exercising power and the emerging Internet culture, external to institutions, can be seen in the area of citizenship and local governance. The projects that addressed this issue arrived at a common conclusion: introducing ICTs into current models of electronic government merely serves to reproduce paternalistic local power relationships. Uca Silva shows how the web sites of the Chilean towns studied are used as a conduit for promoting the image of local leaders and in this way diluting the link between the municipal government and the citizenry, which should be strengthened by the introduction of ICTs (see Silva on "The relationship between the municipality and the community").

Along the same lines, the team coordinated by Susana Finquelievich describes how local government practices in Buenos Aires and Montevideo do not encourage the use of ICTs, since this instrument is reduced to the function of a bulletin board or newsletter (via the Web) and loses sight of the kind of citizen interaction that could be achieved through the social use of ICTs (see their "Does Buenos Aires have electronic government?" and "The social impact of ICTs in Buenos Aires and Montevideo: similarities and differences").

In school life we find anachronistic and paternalistic power relationships surrounding the use of ICTs. In his ethnographic study, Arredondo describes how, in rural schools in Chile, Internet access and learning also depends on bonds of understanding and dedication between students and teachers (see "Theme 2. Achievers and non-achievers: schools and the perpetuation of the digital divide"). This point brings us to the need for ideas and activities to promote citizen-oriented teaching methods for ICTs, based on a new school

culture, as the basis for building more participatory and just societies in Latin America and the Caribbean. We shall delve further into this issue in the conclusion of this book.

The research sponsored by FLACSO and IDRC found that efforts to promote the use of ICTs in the schools and in local governments are often undertaken through isolated initiatives by groups of technical experts from different institutions. These initiatives are generally limited and kept within the traditional forms of power relationships (paternalism, promoting the image of local leaders, adapting technology to the school disciplinary system, etc.).

One way of neutralizing this tendency to reproduce the dominant culture through the instrumental use of ICTs is to foster projects that will articulate Internet use with integral approaches to local development and new citizen-oriented teaching methods (see Scott Robinson's "The components of a hybrid model").

Challenges in building a fair and equitable legal framework for the Internet in Latin America and the Caribbean

A recurrent idea in much of the research, and one that arose throughout the discussions during the seminar at which the project results were presented, is the vital importance of consolidating the right to communication and culture, which includes Internet rights, as the key to ensuring equitable access to ICTs and fostering citizen participation. This is the central objective for the agenda of civil society organizations that promote social policies in different fields (health, education, local development, women's rights, cultural rights, etc.).

Uca Silva (see "Communication as participation") shows that an essential requirement for the exercise of citizenship rights is to use the right to communication as the basis for building links between local government and citizens, as a participatory relationship in which the citizen has the opportunity "to see, hear and speak", i.e. the right to communicate must be conceived as a horizontal relationship that allows citizen participation.

This new principle or right must therefore be made the basis for any rules governing the exchange of knowledge, the exercise of citizenship and the freedom of expression through ICTs. These ICTs are conceived as a tool and a language, the social application of which can provide horizontal support to the exercise and development of social policies (relating to education, health, social security, local development, scientific development, human rights, citizen participation, etc.: see Juliana Martínez on "The intersection between national policies and the Internet"). The adoption of a horizontal approach to communication, such as can be done through the Internet, would not only help to improve the level of political participation but would also make local governance (see Susana Finkelievich et al. in "Introduction: the reshaping of civil society") and social policies (see Juliana Martínez on the topic noted earlier) more transparent.

Yet, in promoting the right to communication and culture¹⁹ through Internet rights, we need to strike a balance between the free flow of knowledge and ideas (conceived as a collective right) and the individual's right to privacy (conceived as a guarantee that protects a person's sensitivities). The research team coordinated by Carlos Gregorio (see "The right to privacy, intimacy and personal data") warns of the danger facing citizens in societies and states that lack a democratic tradition with respect to the possible violations of fundamental human rights that may occur through the indiscriminate use of personal information (on health, economic status, political affiliation, religious beliefs, etc.). This hazard has its roots in the powerful and publicly accessible search engines now available over the Internet and in the availability of databases that include personal information. Based on a detailed analysis of legislative history, international legal instruments and various laws in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, their research proposes ways of balancing the right to communication and culture (free circulation of information and knowledge, freedom of expression) and the right to privacy, intended to protect personal integrity.

Agustín Grijalva (see "Copyright and the Internet") addresses another issue relating to the balance between the free flow of knowledge and the exclusiveness of information. He notes that in developing countries, especially those in Latin America, there is a need to develop legal instruments that will provide for harmony between the right to communication (dissemination of knowledge) and laws governing copyright (which protect intellectual property in a work as an exclusive right). The author suggests that excessively strict limits on the dissemination of knowledge could become a straitjacket and could generate unequal relationships that would impede technological, educational and cultural development in the region, which means that a balance must be struck between the permitted uses of intellectual property²⁰ and the enforcement of copyright laws.

Scott Robinson (see "The components of a hybrid model"), in explaining his proposal for a franchise system for community telecentres, defines the right to communication as a fundamental requirement for achieving meaningful and equitable public access to the Internet. Finally, Roberto Roggiero reinforces this viewpoint by noting the need to encourage development of Internet rights as a direct corollary of the right to freedom of expression. This objective is the foundation for the project on monitoring Internet policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the goals of which is to strengthen social networks and alliances working to defend Internet rights (see his "The Latin America and Caribbean ICT Policy Monitor").

As we can see, a normative model for equitable access to and appropriation of the Internet must be based on a right to communication and culture that establishes a balance between individual rights, such as those to privacy or intellectual property, and social rights, such as that to the free dissemination of knowledge. A legal model of this kind, so essential to developing

relationships of equity in access to knowledge, culture and the exercise of citizenship, can only be achieved by fostering strategic alliances among civil society organizations, the private sector, and national and local governments.²¹

The Internet: an environment and a tool for building a new political culture

The dominance of an instrumental approach to technology and the tendency to confine the use of ICTs within traditional power relationships have the effect of accentuating inequalities and forms of exclusion that are characteristic of Latin American and Caribbean societies.

To understand how the Internet reinforces unequal exchanges, exacerbating the gap between rich and poor countries, between the elites and the great uninformed masses, we must understand it as a language and tool that exists in the midst of different cultural and political contexts. It is essential to interpret it in each of these contexts and to ask: How does it work? To what end? To whose benefit? In other words, we must understand the Internet as a field of competing forces (composed of social groups that are subject to unequal power relations of domination and subordination) in which various social factors (state, private and civil society) interact.

Using the Internet as a language and tool that will allow for the equitable distribution of knowledge and the full exercise of citizenship (with respect to local or national governments) is feasible, provided we can strengthen civil society organizations (see Juliana Martínez on “Strengthening organizational capacities”) and involve them in developing and defending social policies (education, health, human rights, etc.), while at the same time promoting strategic alliances for building a political culture and a notion of citizenship based on exercise of the right to communication and culture, which includes Internet rights, in accordance with principles of social and cultural equity. An undertaking of such magnitude will only be possible by promoting three parallel and convergent processes:

1. Constructing a new vision and *habitus* for the Internet, i.e. a new cultural proposition through projects to encourage the use and appropriation of ICTs as forms of social integration, adopting new and more participatory and horizontal teaching philosophies (projects that will necessarily involve qualitative changes both in schools and in governance, at the local, regional or national level)
2. Reinforcing the right to communication and culture and Internet rights in daily practice as well as explicitly including them in national and international legal frameworks
3. Forming strategic alliances between civil society and its organizations, the private sector and government (local, regional or national) in an effort to foster the social development of ICTs (in terms of both access and the use or social appropriation of this tool)

More detailed considerations on these three processes will be found in the conclusion at the end of this book.

Notes

1. Throughout this introductory paper we use the term information and communication technologies (ICTs) to embrace all technological and communications developments based on the Internet (videoconferencing, chat rooms, discussion lists, e-mail, web-based systems, etc.).
2. Saskia Sassen (1999), in his paper entitled "The impact of the Internet on sovereignty: Unfounded and real worries", explains: "New transnational regimes and institutions are creating systems that strengthen the claims of certain actors (corporations, the large multinational legal firms) and correspondingly weaken the position of smaller players and of states", (p. 189).
3. José Bengoa, in his unpublished article "Globalization, income distribution and human rights" (1999), explains: "The consequence of the recent processes of globalization in peripheral countries has consisted in a reduced ability on the part of states to control economic development within their countries (. . .) In many cases the governments of peripheral countries have made a great effort to place their national economies and their human and natural resources at the disposal of the forces and needs of the international market".
4. "World inequalities have been rising steadily for nearly two centuries. An analysis of long-term trends in world income distribution . . . shows that the distance between the richest and poorest country was about 3 to 1 in 1820, 11 to 1 in 1913, 35 to 1 in 1950, 44 to 1 in 1973 and 72 to 1 in 1972" (UNDP 1999: 38).
5. The 1997 secondary school enrolment rate for females in the least-developed countries was 24.6 percent compared to 66 percent for males in the same year; in developing countries as a whole, the rate for females was 54.8 percent compared to 83 percent for males; in industrialized countries, the rate was 96.3 percent for women and 100 percent for men (UNDP 1999: 232). These figures show the extent of gender inequity in access to education. If we were to study and measure ethnic exclusion in education, we would find similar or greater inequalities.
6. The Internet has the greatest growth capacity of any technology in human history. "The number of Internet hosts (computers with a direct connection) rose from less than 100,000 in 1988 to more than 36 million in 1998" (UNDP 1999: 58).
7. The following data from the UNDP report (1999: 62, 63) will help to understand the selective distribution of the Internet: 0.5 percent of the population of Southeast Asia (which accounts for 8.6 percent of the world population) are Internet users, while the figure for Arab countries (accounting for 4.5 percent of the world population) is only 0.2 percent.
8. In 1998 only 0.8 percent of people in Latin America and the Caribbean had Internet access, and 90 percent of these people were in the higher-income groups. Other poor regions of the world have similar or even lower percentages of Internet users (UNDP 1999: 63).

9. Martin Hopenhayn and Ernesto Ottone (1997: 278–79), citing statistics produced by Fernando Fajnzylber, show that “during the 1980s in Latin America . . . the number of TV sets per thousand inhabitants rose steadily, and the purchasing power of the urban minimum wage fell continuously . . . Latin America and the Caribbean, at first glance, have the greatest number of TV sets for every thousand people and at the same time the worst income distribution of any region in the world . . . For 1993, on average, the region had 165 TV sets per thousand people . . . East Asia and Oceania had an average of 59.”
10. A jury of international experts selected the eight winning projects from the competition in early 2000, based on the criteria published in the international call for proposals which was posted on <http://www.flacso.org.ec>. The project results presented in this book have also been published at the same web site (see the detailed list of electronic sources at the end of this article).
11. One of the winning projects, entitled “Measuring qualitative and quantitative impacts: design and implementation of online registration systems for telecentres using Linux platforms”, sponsored by the Colombian Association of Non-governmental Organizations for E-mail Communication, Colnodo, called for developing a registration system for evaluating the use and application of ICTs according to the variables of gender, education level, age, and physical distance between home and community centre, cross-referenced to variables on occupation or employment, level of access to communication media and user perceptions of the centre providing the service. This instrument is of great use to the coordinators of community centres that provide public ICT access, in conducting qualitative and quantitative evaluations for adjusting their service policies. On the other hand, it is also of great use to students interested in the social impact of the Internet. It is publicly available at <http://www.colnodo.apc.org/registro>.
12. On May 16 and 17, 2001, the International Seminar on Communication, Internet and Society in Latin America was hosted by IDRC and FLACSO-Ecuador, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to discuss the results of the eight winning projects.
13. The editors are grateful for the contributions of Juliana Martínez, Daniel Pimienta, Luis Barnola, Scott Robinson, Agustín Grijalva and Roberto Roggiro, not only in the discussions during the seminar but also in preparing the papers included in this book.
14. This statement can be generalized for Latin America as a whole, remembering however that the case studies presented in this paper refer to pioneering experiments in the region on the application of the Internet to education and local government.
15. It is crucial to examine the social impact of new ICTs as part of the dynamics by which material and cultural capital is reproduced, the continuous conversion of material goods or assets into symbolic goods or assets, within social fields or social areas in which a set of actors and groups interact in correlation with forces that occupy different positions and represent different levels of capital accumulation (this thinking uses the theory of symbolic and material capital developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, 1991: 114).

16. We use *habitus* in the sense defined by Pierre Bourdieu: “the system of arrangements . . . principles that generate and organize practices and representations . . . collectively orchestrated” (1991: 92). The project coordinated by Ester Schiavo, entitled “Towards the construction of *habitus* among the citizenry”, based on an evaluation of local experiments with electronic government, has produced a multimedia tool or application intended to foster a *habitus* of citizen participation among children through their relationship with their local environment, as a way of overcoming the instrumental practices and vision of the Internet. This tool has been published at <<http://www.telpin.com.ar/interneteducativa/proyectounq/unq/unq/web>>.
17. This study provides a detailed ethnographic description of how the Internet is articulated with school discipline and the world of representations and symbols outside the school, among public school students in Bogota. It describes in detail the new approaches to reading, the new ways of building social relationships through chat rooms and, above all, the new forms of identity that young people are developing via the Internet.
18. This research study describes how students in a rural school in the Argentine community of Tanti (in the province of Córdoba) shared their experiences and developed joint activities with students in a similar institution in a distant part of the same country in undertaking a local reforestation project. A similarly successful experiment was undertaken by another group of students in a school in the town of Zapala (in the province of Neuquén), who established a relationship with students abroad that resulted in incorporating ICTs into the system for learning English. A further example is the use of the Internet by students in a school on the Argentine coast to share experiences from their efforts to save penguins threatened by oil spills.
19. We understand “the right to communication and culture” to mean the guarantee that citizens can be heard and that their opinions will be taken into account in governance and decision-making in their community or country, and that they can receive transparent information on social actions and policies that local or national authorities undertake on their behalf. This guarantee also includes the right to political participation through free access to information and knowledge. Implementing this also calls for effective exercise of “Internet rights”, a collective guarantee that includes the possibility of physical access to ICTs as well as learning and social appropriation.
20. Grijalva, in his analysis of international trends relating to copyright and international legal instruments, such as the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the Andean Decision on Copyright, describes how commercial interests in developed countries produce pressure to increase protection for intellectual property. This situation threatens the balance that should exist between the dissemination of intellectual property (right to communication and culture) and ownership rights over intellectual authorship. He explains that only with such a balance between these two rights is it possible to ensure a positive flow of knowledge and to encourage technological and cultural innovation.

21. Juliana Martínez (see “Building alliances”) and Scott Robinson (see “The components of a hybrid model”) both stress the need for building strategic alliances in order to implement social policies and programmes related to ICTs. Susana Finkelievich and her team warn of the need to enlist the cooperation of civil society organizations, the academic world and government in the preparation of social and technological policies for cities (see “ICTs, democracy and social capital”).

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Electronic sources

- <<http://www.flacso.org.ec/TIC>> This web site provides detailed information on the competition "Research Projects on the Social Impacts of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Latin America and the Caribbean" and offers the electronic version of the eight winning projects and the five additional papers included in this book, which were presented and discussed at the International Seminar on Communication, Internet and Society in Latin America held in Quito, Ecuador, on May 16 and 17, 2001.
- "Navigators and castaways in cyberspace: Psychosocial experience and cultural practices in school children's Internet". Project presented by the Programa de Formación en Educación of the Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia. Coordinator: José Cabrera Paz.
- "Introducing new information and communication technologies in two rural schools of central Chile: An ethnographic approximation." Project presented by the Programa Interdisciplinario de Investigaciones en Educación (PIIE), Santiago, Chile. Coordinator: Miguel Angel Arredondo Jeldes.
- "Learning from the pioneers: Best practices as exemplified in the TELAR network". Project presented by Fundación Evolución, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Coordinators: Adriana Vilela and Paula Pérez.
- "The social impact of introducing ICTs in local government and public services: Case studies in Buenos Aires and Montevideo". Project presented by the Asociación Civil Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, Coordinator: Susana Finquelievich.
- "The social impact of information and communication technologies at the local level". Project presented by SUR, Centro de Estudios Sociales y Educación. Santiago, Chile. Coordinator: Uca Silva.
- "The Internet and local governance: Towards the creation of a community *habitus*". Project presented by the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Coordinator: Ester Schiavo.
- "Measuring qualitative and quantitative impacts: Design and implementation of online registration systems for telecentres using Linux platforms". Project presented by Asociación Colombiana de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales para la Comunicación Vía Correo Electrónico (Colnodo), Bogota, Colombia. Coordinator: Julián Casasbuenas.

- “The impact of new information and communication technologies on privacy rights”. Project presented by the Instituto de Investigación para la Justicia, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Coordinator: Carlos Gregorio.
- “Copyright and the Internet”. Paper presented by Agustín Grijalva, Professor of Economic Law, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador campus.
- “Towards a model of franchises for community telecentres in Latin America”. Paper presented by Scott S. Robinson, Department of Anthropology, Universidad Metropolitana Iztapalapa, Mexico.
- “The Internet and socially relevant public policies: Why, how and what to advocate?” Paper presented by Juliana Martínez, Fundación Acceso, San José, Costa Rica.
- “The social impacts of ICTs in Latin America and the Caribbean: The MISTICA virtual community and the OLISTICA observation network”. Paper presented by Daniel Pimienta, Fundación Redes y Desarrollo (FUNREDES, Dominican Republic), and Luis Barnola, International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada).
- “Introductory notes for the analysis of ICT policies in Latin America and the Caribbean”. Paper presented by Roberto Roggiero, Association for Progressive Communications (APC).