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	Understanding Cybersocial Network trends, for innovation in Libraries **Soledad Ferreiro**[1] Director Chilean Library of Congress **José Miguel Muga**[2] Consultant for Innovation Management Chilean Library of Congress
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Abstract:

This document shows our concern about how libraries can participate in the increasing world of networks and cybercitizenship. The Library of Congress of Chile is exploring these possibilities and shares how this experience of adding value to Congress and the roles of congresspersons, could be extended to other libraries.

We have identified three ways in which a library can approach cybersocial networks. Firstly, as a sponsor and co-creator, it can provide technological platforms and human capabilities so citizens can learn to participate in cybernets. Secondly, as a citizen trendwatcher, it can identify social conversations, particularly, those emerging and not published yet in papers or books. Lastly, it serves as a promoter of emerging collectives that shape our national community, in subjects of social political interest in Congress. With a strong commitment to promoting digital culture, the Library's web catalyzes all our digital services, with a very high response from the public. We will share the path taken, the drivers and steps followed in this exploration.

The Context: Citizen Activism and Libraries

Internet enables citizens to build and participate in collaborative and distributed networks. In the world of distributed networks, the validation logic operates in a different manner than in the world of books and newspapers. Here, the important thing is the amount of visits, comments and links that the author receives. Power is held in the capability of being attractive to the network of cyber users, and not by being chosen by an editor. Internet's increasing use, worldwide access and the availability of multiple interface technologies have generated conditions for changing citizen interaction into a great influential power in civic activity. Tools such as Blogs, Forum, SMS and Chatrooms, have been effectively employed not only in everyday coordination or individual expressions, but also in communities and collective actions leading to changes of courses of actions within communities as is noted in "El Poder de las redes" by David de Ugarte[i].

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Citizen Cyberactivism, where opinions, concerns and content are posted, quoted and referred from one to another through free tools, can be followed by the library. The analysis of these conversations may become useful feedback for the members of parliament, where they will recognize the main concerns people share, which could eventually lead to changes in public policy. The library can thus support and stimulate the creation of links between groups, such as the elderly, and can generate citizen behavior observatories, -- and a most important role--, that of being an instrument for Parliament in the generation of conversations and debate, in which the citizen can speak on themes of national interest.

Observing emergent phenomena implies entering into moods that open or close possibilities of understanding them.

1. **Trivializing the phenomena**. Many citizens don't understand the difference between a blog and a web page. Probably, because web 1.0 was built for publishing and retrieving information in and from the net, not for building conversations or links with unknown people that share common concerns. In this new field, the identity is a key role in the interactions. Users have the chance to trust or distrust blog authors, according to their observance of the patterns and codes of the cyber-relations, built and understood only online by the cyberactivist communities in permanent construction of consensus. Citizens´ commitments and concerns can be projected in the net with similar moods as in the out-line life. Posting with the complete name, leaving comments in a proper language, making references to the source of the posted ideas, having a respectful and humane treatment with the others, are some of the ways cyberactivists build their own identity and the respect and trust of the others. Some authors use blogs as an easier way to manage content than a web page does. Others don't answer user's comments; or don't have a commitment to the frequency of their postings.

   So, when a blog is online and its owner does not respond to comments or build conversations, or has an unsuitable language, users will acquire a certain interpretation of him or her that with time will constitute the authors´ identity in the net.

2. **Demonize the phenomena**. There are those who believe that when centralization and control is lost, they loose so much power that they become fierce opponents and prefer to exclude it from any possibility for action. The creation and understanding of power in the net is built differently. Access to knowledge is open, access to build over that knowledge is open, information is public and updated every time an author decides. Bloggers value authors according to their identity and the improvements or new ideas posted. Interactions among people work in asymmetric channels and multi directions ways of communicating. The new power is not related to the way information is controlled, but to how each author builds trust exposing itself among their communities of readers.

3. **Believing it's only a fashion**. Lastly, we see a complacent approach, perceiving these initiatives as the continuation of something that has been modified, but really nothing new, and not a topic of concern or interest, but rather irrelevant and transient. Web 2.0 brings a new understanding for the traditional patterns of relations, human behavior and social maps. Some issues in Chile such as cyber copyright or digital rights management still have no legal support. The understanding of the phenomena is still in an early stage.

The Library of Congress, Chile: "taking into account" attitude.

How do we fit this new approach into our daily practices; how does it become inherent to our vision and mission; how do we nurture our community with the results of our observations?

Our new vision and mission, January 2004, declares, among other aspects, two main drivers, that have allowed us to innovate in our services:

- To generate value for the members of parliament;
- To promote digital culture within the institution and for citizens as a commitment with society.

To be true to the first statement, we have to be permanently aware of the main parliamentary concerns and needs – so as to provide services and products of value, perceived by them.

Our commitment to promote an internal digital culture, within the Institution, Congress and the greater community, has provided us the opportunity to make progress in two ways: by giving space and voice to young professionals hired who are born digital and training their listening capabilities so they can act with resolution and by teaching both the staff and citizens how to take advantage of the vast amount of tools and gadgets that allow acquiring new practices from the digital world.

Cultivating *disclosure* as a new attitude for libraries[ii]

We understand the culture of disclosing as an attitude where we are aware of the new waves that address relevant issues of current interest. But this is not enough; we have to commit ourselves in a new attitude where we constantly explore, experiment and assess the new possibilities that appear before us.

We have been attentive to new dimensions of political participation, which some authors name **Politics 2.0**. In the latest parliamentary election in Chile (2005), the use of blogs was already noticeable by the candidates during the campaign. To date, there are still very few parliamentarians that interact this way with citizens. However, in Chile, those who have been able to generate audiences are the blogs of Representatives Farías and Valenzuela, and Senators Novoa, Cantero and Flores, for example. As Juan Freire says, describing politics and action, "The politician 2.0 loses control but wins influence and relevance".

On the subject of **cyberactivism**, Atina Chile appeared in the Chilean blogsphere in 2005. It promotes cybercitizen expressions on digital culture, education and environment. Its permanent growth in visits and links is recognized by the Hispanic blogsphere. On his first visit to our library, the Spanish cyberactivist, David de Ugarte, made us realize the particular characteristics of Atina Chile bloggers, as they generously linked each other, building collaborative opinions and networks.

Digital citizen journalism

Our first reference was *OhMyNews*, the Korean newspaper, which we learned about from the Chilean press correspondent, María Pastora Sandoval. In Chile, Atina Chile helped develop local digital newspapers, far from the capital, where cybercitizens are the creators of contents. El Morrocotudo", was the first Chilean newspaper with these characteristics, it was followed by "El Amaule", "El Rancahuaso" and "El Observatodo", as networks of multiple citizen authors, focused on their own regional territories.

Social mobilization: new features
In May, 2006, we observed an unprecedented high school student social mobilization, unseen since the return of democracy in Chile (1990). High school students, mainly from public schools, demanded changes in the Educational Organic Law (LOCE). On this occasion, there was a particular feature. The intensive use of photoblog, (blogs focused on photos) became the main tool for disseminating student demands and coordinating their massive movement. Their capacity to mobilize and respond was impressive; they practically did not need central nodes or burocratical hierarquies to be informed and take action. Rosario Lizana, Chilean correspondent for Global Voices, provides a brief summary of what was happening at that moment, showing this new capability in emerging leaderships, "that in other situations, would probably be weighed down by bureaucracy".

Virtual Spaces
Chronologically speaking, our last referent has been the observation of the growth of citizen participation in virtual spaces, particularly Second Life. Our attention was attracted by the apparition of places such as The Library of Congress of the United States, Democracy Island and Capitol Hill, quoting their real life equivalent. Chilean presence in this space is quite minor, but it already exists, as a reference to the government headquarters, named La Moneda. Nevertheless, this is a private contribution and not a State initiative; it has served as a meeting place for expressions of unsatisfied citizens.

Our way of moving forward

We are developing 3 innovation projects for new services related to our relation with cybercitizens with three different strategies:

- As sponsors and co-creators of a blog, we provide technological platforms and human capabilities to train citizens and organizations on how to participate in cybernets.
- Secondly, as citizen trendwatcher, by identifying social conversations, particularly those emerging, not yet published in papers or books.
- Lastly, as a promoter of emerging collectives that shape our national community, around issues of social political interest in Congress.

The Library as Sponsor and Co-creator of Cybersocial Networks

The Project Major Leagues: the blog co-created and developed by the Library, January 2006.

The context
Seniors today -- even in a time of transition--, lead longer lives than before, and have new opportunities to be actively connected to the world in a net society, although without regular jobs. Cybersocial networks are a vehicle for multiple conversations and comments without censorship that can become a way to avoid solitude and despair and an opportunity to seek new projects and collaborative entrepreneurship. Members of such a community can promote their identity in a new environments or reinvent themselves in new roles, different from their previous jobs and closer to their alternative vocations, roles that now can become central to theirs lives and be shared with others. Networks increasingly take care of people's practices in their lives. Skype for example, connects people face to face and by voice; an Internet phone at no extra cost. These benefits have to be passed on. One of the barriers though, is the lack of special training needed for groups that belong to the printed culture, where changing daily practices means a much greater effort than for other younger groups.

Fostering senior participation is not exclusively an aim from our members of parliament, but from our society. Approximately 2.000.000 people with more than 60 years old have a life expectancy of 74 years; a sound number, that could shift political votes.

The Government of President Michelle Bachelet is highly sensitive to enact programs that improve life of marginal groups, for instance, through SENAMA, Servicio Nacional del Adulto Mayor -- the Seniors National Service.

Listening to the elderly in their everyday lives is a source for gathering concerns and areas of discomfort, which in the long run can be structured and presented to the members of the parliament. This material eventually could lead to reforms in our public policies such as new bills, laws or administrative rules for the betterment of the life of the senior population.

Methodology
We developed a set of actions such as:
- Understanding the issue, by the leader of the Project Ms. Calvo, who wrote a paper of the experience[iii].
- Contacts with expert organizations, national and international, through breakfast invitations from the Library. As a result we received recommendations of recent research and concerns gathered by the institutions.
- Frequent meetings with parliamentarian's advisors to talk about issues of concern gathered in breakfast meetings, and to check the reaction to our findings.
- Invitation to social leaders of Senior Citizen Groups together with members of the Library and a small group of parliamentarians interested in these matters, with one congresswoman attending.
- In-house development of the blog software tool, in Spanish and installing it in our premises.
- Training the employees of organizations focused on the elderly on how to write posts.
- Publishing posts, by the project leader on behalf of other authors.
- Keeping the blog online and managing it from the library.

Issues we encountered
- We faced a double challenge, on the one hand preparing a small group of staff to understand the cybersocial phenomena, and on the other hand, to provoke enthusiasm and participation among the elderly on something that seemed distant to them.
- The Blogsphere was an unknown concept for our target group, so it was harder to attract them to meetings and training activities.
- Using the blog to create active communities was a new experience for us and for the senior citizens.
- Dealing with innovation without a communication strategy for our public and stakeholders, prevents their full incorporation and thus generates risks for the project.
- The technology was difficult to use in its early implementation, in terms of functions and design.
- We lacked a face to face training program
- We did no not set up a strategy of collaboration with the organizations of Seniors Citizens.

The Library as Citizen Trendwatcher

Using a nautical metaphor, we could have done short haul navigation, safe, conventional, near the coast, stopping at every port before going on to the next, looking at port navigation charts so as not to make mistakes. But we preferred open sea navigation, with approximate charts like the ancient discoverers, assuming the risks of errors. The first path is appropriate for partial and progressive changes, geared to continuous improvement. The second is riskier yet contains more fertile opportunities to bring products and services that will expand the possibilities for our audiences. We call this "the reinvention of the offer which the Library is".

For parliamentarians is important to interpret citizen behavior. Therefore we understand that one of the new roles the Library must take up is that of trendwatcher. Thus, we consider that Libraries should be aware of citizen behavior and trends that happen in the communities they serve, and especially should survey marginal trends that occur locally and globally, that can affect these communities.

To begin with this initiative we used what we had learned as the appropriate methodology - **strategic listening** - which we understand as an "opening to the world of the other". With this approach, we can discover what we interpret as "anomalies" in the communities we serve. We understand "anomalies" as blindspots to pursue new courses of action, and the resignation of those who see no new possibilities.

Our qualitative research used to observe citizen behavior, is sustained on virtual anthropology, since the network provides a great opportunity to follow citizen conversations, free of intermediaries that correct or censor, watching how conversations are generated in a world of cyber content creators or authors. More than ever, we have the possibility of learning about emerging conversations before they are published in institutional forum, books or periodicals.

This approach led us to create an area called "Theme Observatory" or "Subject Watch" geared to monitor trends and keep an eye on what is going on in a specific theme, what happened in the past and how do we keep alert of the future. Integrated by a multidisciplinary group of analysts that closely follow the cyberactivism networks, they provide information to our Library analysts, advisors and researchers as well as to our members of the parliament. The drivers are the agendas of Congress, the Executive and the Citizens agenda, the global issues and the conversations that occur in the peripheral networks.

On the other hand, we formed a team - led by J.M. Muga -- dedicated to innovation and the creation of prototypes which, upon approval, are installed in the respective areas of the institution. These developers of new products or services use research on cyber communities, to identify services targeted to segments of citizen, which we channel through our web and in face to face activities.

Considering that 2.000.000 young people are not registered for voting -- a main concern of our members of parliament -- we started a qualitative research on high school / secondary students with the purpose of developing a Library product relevant to their interests and everyday lives that eventually could bring them closer to the political arena. A successful and economic way of researching has been through the extensive photoblog net (http://fotolog.cl or http://fotolog.com), in which individuals share their collective, active and supportive interests, in the same way as the individualist and self-referenced concerns.

With this research we were looking at citizen behavior. We segmented the students from the point of view of their values; their everyday practices and the tools they use in their daily life; the types of group and community activities in which they participate; the leaders chosen by the young, who are seen as a reference to other young people; their opinion of political activity and education. This process has provided a well sustained and precise source of information for consumer behavior, as a qualitative method that looks at everyday life. We obtained key orientations to develop in the future a Civic Orientation Program prototype, in a format both attractive and understandable for these youngsters.

The Library as Promoter of Emerging Collectives

Through discussion with members of the Senate and specifically with Senator Fernando Flores Labra, we were led to see that the library could become a promoter of emerging collectives for the Congress and the Country. In this context, there are several key subjects to be observed in Chile, according to the opinion of members of our Congress, such as Energy, Centralization vs. Decentralization, Employment for Young People, Broadband Policies. These subjects have not evolved naturally with the changes and dynamism required by globalization, and it means that the country must have the capability for articulating its own proposals, in this global context. The Library can become an instrument for the articulation of these emerging collectives in key subjects, in the creation of thematic nodes.

Considering this, we are developing a methodology for installing subject nodes. The purpose of these nodes is to have an early warning system for emerging possibilities and an awareness of the relevance of the subjects being watched. Thus the actors, such as Congress and the citizens, will have the elements to take action, considering the priorities for the country.

This work was organized in four phases:
- Background work
- Methodology of installation.
- Prototype development (in progress)
- Evaluation and dissemination.

First stage: Background work
Upon the recommendation of Senator Flores, we took, "Politics of Nature" by Bruno Latour[iv], as our theoretical basis which we discussed with him in multiple occasions, among us, and with the consultants Mario Valdivia, Chauncey Bell and Guillermo Wechsler. After a profound analysis of that text with the aforementioned, we generated our own document, "The Production of Texts and the Invention of Worlds", which will serve to continue that analysis and guide our work into the future.

This concern on how a node may be installed is very well described by Mario Valdivia, consultant for the Library, in his own words.

> "Effectively, the process of installing a new thematic node implies the emergence and dissemination of dialogues in the national community. These dialogs bring forward a new world of concerns and possibilities that affect community actors; a new space in which they obtain relevance and visibility, phenomena the appeared diffuse before, inexistent or merely unimportant; in which new opportunities for the creation of economic value are perceived, which were not available before; in which new risks of fractures are revealed as threatening for the national community; a new world in which new values are manifest and new standards for justice and injustice that must be considered.

Summing up, the world of the possible is reconfigured by giving space to citizen voices so they can express themselves and drive new emergent social practices to be relevant. Thus, new social actors are incorporated, until new institutions consolidate, accommodating to previously existing structures. In this process, texts are being articulated, that gather more consensual weight as the process of social practices changes, until it ends becoming texts of wisdom and established shared knowledge, commonly accepted and valid legislation, codes, manuals, maps, statistics, measurements."

Second stage: Installation methodology

Considering this background, for the second phase, the design of the installation methodology was commissioned to Mario Valdivia. A process of installation in three stages was developed:

1) Definition of the subject of the Thematic Node;

2) Definition of representatives and relevant social actors, considered as valid voices, to be invited to participate in the dialog process. It is necessary to consider, for this stage, voices that represent citizens and social organizations, the Scientific, Academic and specialist communities, political representatives, economists, entrepreneurs, and authorities considered for their moral standing;

3) Definition of the important milestones, considering the installation of a thematic node, including:

- A process of communicating visions and interests, integrating listening and recording process. The Library will produce texts that account for these visions and concerns.
- Invitation to representatives, spokespersons and actors to discuss the visions, taking care that they are listened to and seriously considered. The Library will produce evaluation texts about the concerns and emerging practices, considering those accepted and those rejected.
- A rearticulating agenda, in the measure that Congress decides to mainstream some of subjects that come up. The Library will provide the texts for an action agenda, with contradicting options described, as well as the background elements, in political, economic, scientific and ethical terms.
- Institutionalization or mainstreaming the experience, when the corresponding authorities make the necessary decisions to transform the possibilities into a new reality. The Library will generate texts for disseminating the changes.

Third stage: Prototype development.

The Library Committee made up by the President of the Senate, the Speaker and the Library Director, chose the "Relationship between Chile- Asia and the Pacific" as the prototype area.

Chile is a country that has excelled in the development of international treaties, especially commercial. In the case of Asian countries, treaties have been signed with China, Korea and Japan. And, even though macro figures show an active relation – a third of Chilean exports go to Asia – the citizen are not fully aware of the opportunities they can obtain from the treaties[v]. Installing this Thematic Node appears to be an excellent opportunity to create links between citizens and institutions and between Chileans that live in Asia with Chileans that want to have links with Asia, as pioneers.

Once the leading team was established, in January 2007, the identification of relevant actors began. This was done considering academic networks, national

political actors involved in the subject, institutions and NGOs that are developing this area. At the same time, texts are being created and gathered on the relationship between Chile and Asia, as well as visual matter and a selection of reference webs. These texts are focused on concerns of Chileans as to participation in the wider Asia-Pacific basin, from a Chilean outlook or perspective. Another issue are Chileans, that do not know each other, who live in Asia, who can share conversations of their experiences to make that foreign world more approachable and understandable.

We have generated the information architecture needed for this network, to use when they begin to post. The main coordinating tool is a portal. Today you can find information and references on China and Japan (http://asiapacífico.bcn.cl). At the same time, conferences are in preparation so the different voices can express their interest or concerns on the related subjects. We began producing videos to place them in the site, where pioneers can show their experience.

I a few months, the previous identity of the Library as service and product provider has changed into becoming a valid node for this network of interactions. We expect that a mood of awareness and commotion will appear with the incorporation of cybercitizens into this network. We also expect that there will be urgency for appropriation of the opportunities that international treaties with Asia bring to the citizens.

Lessons to be Learned.

This initiative is a journey in an untravelled road, full of discoveries in this glimpsing, bringing forward, watching, capturing and feeding back so they become opportunities or policies, laws, regulations that enhance the citizens´ everyday life.

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Chatrooms	chatrooms
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David de Ugarte	http://www.deugarte.com/
Forum	forum
Fotolog	http://fotolog.cl or http://fotolog.com
José M. Muga	http://www.muga.cl/
Juan Freire	http://nomada.blogs.com/

The politician 2.0 loses control but wins influence and relevance

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Journal of New Communications Research, Society for New Communications Research, Volume I / Issue 1
[iv] Bruno Latour is Profesor in the Center for the Study of Innovation at the School of Mines in paris.
[v] As an example, of the 2266 Scholarchips " **Presidente de la República"**, awarded between 1991 and 2006 for studies abroad, only 2 were requested for an Asian country.