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New Media Effects: Do Formats Organize Networks?

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Abstract

New media networks differ from old media networks in the sense that for the press, TV and radio, the formats are more established. To old media one sends a press release, a sound can, or a video can. One prepares sound bites, organizes scripted events, and invites journalists in the hopes that the story eventually told adheres to the prepared text, and overall narrative. But what does one send to a network? Does one send information in the 'old media' formats? What does a network do with a press release? Are certain formats routinely filed away or deleted, whilst others tend to circulate in networks, creating 'new media network effects'?

The work treats formats broadly, and also makes distinctions between various kinds of new media networks - social networks, issue networks and stranger networks. In a discussion of the formats circulated and network behaviors effected by the Association of Progressive Communications - a highly professionalized civil society network actor in the field of information and communications policy - the purpose of the paper is to open up avenues of thought into how different formats operate in various types of networks, and in particular, whether formats may organize new media networks and, perhaps, social movements.

Keywords: new media, old media, networks, NGOs, information formats, social movements

1. Introduction: Circulating the Old Media Format through New Media

Greenmediatoolshed.org runs an old media spamming machine (see figure 1). [1] It is a database system, rented from a meta-data company (Vocus), and contains all the names, addresses, fax and phone numbers of the journalists working for U.S. newspapers and other media companies.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that join the Green Media Tool Shed receive access to the database, and its accompanying machine. The machine accepts press releases and other inputs, and allows the user to select the destinations for them. Press send, and one NGO statement is underway to many journalists.[2]

Currently the Green Media Tool Shed would like to make the information collected and inputted into it more grassroots-based and open source, decoupling the project from the commercial meta-data. They would like NGOs all around the United States to join, and to input and update the contact details of the journalists, including mobile phone numbers for short text messaging (SMS). Whilst not their official intention, they also may desire to have the NGOs rate the journalists on a friendliness scale. They may wish to have the journalists ranked or red-starred for their willingness to write about NGOs, the issues according to NGOs, and also the broader NGO issue narrative of the story in spirit, or verbatim. Should the future system keep the press releases that pass through it, analysis would be able to compare the machine inputs with the newspaper outputs. For example, one could query Google News for the NGO press release text and analyze its treatment across newspapers. [3] With Google News scrapers, or news (RSS) readers set to the newspapers that received the press release, one could monitor not only NGO ‘press sense’ but also newspaper ‘cooperation’, i.e., whether NGOs know how to ‘play the media’, and whether journalists take up the story at all, paraphrasing NGO text, or even passing it on word for word. On the basis of the brief description above, both the means as well as the purposes of dealing with old media appear fairly established. There is a chosen format for sending information to old media (e.g., press release), and there is a way of measuring ‘effectiveness,’ i.e., getting (friendly) press. [4]

If such a system were built for communications to Internet-based networks (instead of to old media), what would it look like? Which inputs would it take, and which outputs would it generate?

What would be the chosen formats for sending information, and what would be the means of measuring ‘effectiveness’? In describing the formats put into circulation by an active civil society network (the Association for Progressive Communications) and the kinds of new media network effects they achieve, the following also provides a discussion that could lead to ideas about how one would build a new media networking machine, based on friendly formats.

2. What do new media networks do with old media?

The term format most readily connotes the form of a production, and traditionally (prior to McLuhan) the form is distinct from the content. [5] New media, and especially the Web, are interesting in this regard, for traditionally there has been only form, and requests for content. URLs are reserved, databases await data, and content management systems await content. The new Web sites need ‘filling in’.

Additionally, new media has been held up as an area where the form/content distinction collapses most spectacularly through practice. [6] No data can be unformatted; data can be reformatted only. There are only friendlier formats promising more compatibility. Seeing the world through friendly and less friendly formats may be one means to come to grips with networks and how they operate with new media.

The undertaking thus far has been to contrast the relative stability of old media formats (and the machines that may be made to circulate them) with the relative novelty of new media formats, inquiring into which machines may be devised to circulate them. (We are interested in ways for these new machines to measure the effectiveness of new media formats in networks, too.) One may understand a new media machine, thus, as a device that circulates friendly formats to networks, and understands what the recipients have done with the format.

Which formats are friendly? Is a format friendly when it the information is shaped and communicated in a way that is liable to be passed on? Is the level of circulation of formats – passing it on – the means to measure effectiveness? Even if we discover friendly formats that are more likely to be passed on, do new media networks revolve around them? More radically, may the formats themselves organize networks?

In preliminary work recently undertaken into formats circulating in networks, we have made a few observations. First, new media networks employ old media formats (but not only). If we were to judge effectiveness in terms of ‘pure’ message transfer (as we would in old media, using Google News or similar news aggregating service to understand if the journalist spamming machines and other activities are working), the NGOs do extraordinarily ‘well’ with their networks. Networks appear to circulate press releases and such by ‘forwarding’ or re-announcing as a matter of routine information sharing. [7]

We also found, however, that NGOs circulate them without ‘old media’ care. There is less editing and checking, and more verbatim transfer. The networks thus react *worse* to old media formats in another sense, too. Intervening events that would change the nature of the message may go unnoticed, as the network keeps forwarding them along. This would be one of the less beneficial sides to ‘viral’ messaging, so-called, or the passing-it-on style from friend to friend and acquaintance, or from professional issue actor to another. [8] The finding is also in keeping with how computer viruses continue to circulate on the Internet months and months after the antidote has been announced, and software programs patched. [9] The viruses circulate *unaffected*. The software is available to change the virus (rename it or delete it), but the virus continues to circulate unchanged. But the analogy with viruses ends there. NGO networks are not merely

(socio-technical) infrastructure that ‘hosts’ circulation of whatever is sent to it. [10] Rather, particular formats may prompt particular network behaviors.

In particular, we have found, in a case study, that there are distinctive network behaviors for particular formats. In receiving a press release, for example, the networks accord the old media format a similar, short attention span as one would suspect, historically, in newspaper reading and article spreading. [11] Once the message has arrived, network actors appear to stop passing them along in a similar way as one would throw out the daily newspaper, or send someone an article from it.¹ Other network formats live longer, richer lives. Besides the press release and others like that, we inquire into formats put into play by networks that may not resemble old media. What are the network lives led by the ‘franchise-able event’, ‘tool’, ‘training module’, and ‘prize’?

Once we have some understanding of how networks treat particular formats, there is a more important question about ‘format work’. The crucial question is whether formats have to do with the organization of networks, whether circulating information formats may make, or routinely configure, networks. [12] Putting forward the idea that formats may organize networks is also to say that certain types of networks may not exist independent of the formats that bring them together through the circulation of carefully prepared network information interventions.

3. The Network and the Press Release: APC’s statement on the downing of the Al-Jazeera Web site

¹ The *New York Times* default setting for sending an article to someone is abstract and article link, as opposed to full article in the body of the email message. After a day or two, clicking article link brings the recipient of email message to a paid article archive area.

We introduce the research into formats with an example of the rich format work of a ‘network actor’, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), which describes itself as a network. We discuss two APC cases (as well as the case of a Croatian NGO participating in a network), inquiring into how the formats circulate in networks, and which types of networks are strengthened or created. The APC employ the following means to communicate with its network.

Delivered-To: apcnews@mailman.greennet.org.uk

From: Karen Higgs <khiggs@apc.org>

Organization: Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

X-Accept-Language: en

To: APC Forum <apc.forum@lists.apc.org>, APCNews list <apcnews@lists.apc.org>, APC Press <apc.press@lists.apc.org>

Subject: [APCNews] Announcing the APC Annual Report

Please circulate. Apologies for cross-posting.

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APC's Latest Annual Report: Strategic use of ICTs by civil society and engaging civil society in ICT policy

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, October 6 2003 -- In the course of 2002 APC focused its energies primarily in two areas - strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by civil society and engaging civil society in ICT policy processes. The use of ICTs by civil society has been central to APC since our founding and we have been working on ICT policy issues since 2000 when APC members identified ensuring internet rights for civil society as a priority. But in 2002 we started to delve beneath the surface of the challenges our communities confront and instead of responding to the symptoms, find ways to help civil society anticipate and plan for the challenges in their policy environment at home or in their use of ICTs in their workplace.

Highlights covered in the 2002 APC annual report include: APC in the run-up to the first-ever United Nations summit on the information society (WSIS), the APC ICT policy monitors in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, a new training course helped civil society organisations understand how ICT policy decisions affect their work, the Africa Hafkin Prize recognised people-centred ICT policy initiatives, tools development included a free software content management system and piloting in four continents of the Gender Evaluation Methodology for ICT and internet initiatives (GEM).

And achievements from APC members on five continents such as:

- IN-EA, Kenya: Information for drought preparedness
- BlueLink, Bulgaria: Electronic networking begins in a war-torn province as BlueLink builds bridges in Kosova/o
- Fantsuam Foundation: Local health content in Nigeria blends tradition and science
- Tau, Argentina: Non-profits and solidarity groups under pressure in Argentina's second city create an alternative information exchange
- Jinbonet, South Korea: Campaign against the revision of South Korean copyright law

Download the APC Annual Report 2002 from <http://www.apc.org/books>. The report will be available shortly in Spanish.

(The annual report is in PDF.) But file formats and email communication protocols (with their opportunities for measuring effectiveness through download counts and other means) are only the beginning of the inquiry into information formats. Announced as well are other formats for the network: 'participation' in a summit, 'policy monitors', a 'training course', a 'prize', 'tools', a 'methodology' and 'membership' (announcement). This set of items is particular to APC, though APC, as a highly professional and socialized network actor, has designed initiatives that

are both typical of NGO ‘network work’ and also designed to circulate, both to its members as well as to other close or more remote network actors, including governmental, inter-governmental organizations, funders and, less so, academics. As such the initiatives may be taken as network inputs for network circulation.

In our work we looked, first, into a particular old media format APC put into play: the press release. The press release concerned APC’s reactions to the downing of the *Al-Jazeera* English-language Web site. [13] On 24 March 2003 *Al-Jazeera* launched its English-language, aljazeera.net. The next day the Qatar-based TV station (and Web site hosted in the U.S.) released pictures of American war prisoners. The site was hit heavily; one of *Al-Jazeera*’s spokesmen spoke of a distributed denial of service attack (DDoS). [14] The site was repeatedly defaced with American ‘patriotic’ matter, some allegedly originating from .mil email addresses. There were other reactions, too. For example, *Al-Jazeera* reporters were asked to leave the New York Stock Exchange.

About ten days later, on 4 April 2003, the APC issued a ‘press release’ (in English), later followed by versions in Spanish and French. [15] The header and the first two paragraphs read:

Statement by APC Opposing Actions Against the Online Presence of Middle East News Agency, Al-Jazeera

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay -- APC opposes actions against the online presence of Al-Jazeera. The Internet must be allowed to freely perform its unique and vital role as a promoter of “freedom of expression” and content diversity, especially in times of conflict.

APC opposes censorship on the Internet and states in its Internet Rights Charter[1] that “the Internet must be protected from all attempts to censor social and political debate”.

The Internet Rights Charter argues that “the Internet is an ideal space for the recording and promotion of culturally and politically diverse content”.

According to Karen Higgs at the APC, the press release (or statement) was sent to the 1,300 email address from three APC lists: APC Forum <apc.forum@lists.apc.org>, APC News <apcnews@lists.apc.org>, and APC Press <apc.press@lists.apc.org>. After a request to the members for an endorsement, 19 (of the 32) members complied (see table 1). [16]

To ascertain what happened to the press release (in terms of its circulation in and beyond the various APC networks), researchers and I in late October 2004 (some six months after the release) queried a series of search engines (Google, Altavista, Alexa, Alltheweb) for this string: *Internet must be allowed to freely perform its unique and vital role.* To control, we also sought APC AND *Al-Jazeera* (or its equivalents across the engines), in order to seek non-verbatim referencing. We looked at the organizations returned in the engine results, and the posting dates of their pages, in an effort to ascertain the extent of at least its Web-based circulation. [17] In particular we were interested in the life of the press release around and beyond the event. We also concerned ourselves with whether the press release organized networks, however temporarily.

Networks are divided in this inquiry into social, issue and stranger networks - into those actors one would consider to be in one’s broader social network, those NGO and intergovernmental actors formally working on the issue and those outside that known and specific issue-professionalized sphere – ‘strangers’ who may or may not be working directly on the issue (of media freedom, in this case). [18]

In terms of its resonance on the Web, there was no reference to APC AND Al-Jazeera, independent of verbatim usages, and the intact string was picked up and reformatted by about one-third of the members of APC's network. (The release was translated by network actors into three additional languages -Brazilian Portuguese, Slovak and Japanese. The translation into Slovak does not appear to have been picked up by other online publications beyond use by APC's own member in the Czech Republic.)

Beyond the APC network, the following known actors picked up or cited the string (see table 2).

These actors may be characterized as known issue-oriented NGOs and media, without the intergovernmental component. The BBC Online and IPS were the only larger formal media organizations that picked up the story; Oneworld is another the NGO news aggregator. All three are said to be part of the APC 'press network'.

The following actors are not personally known, and picked up or cited the string. (Because they are unknown, they have longer URLs. See table 3.)

The press statement, however, was picked up by strangers, although almost all are perhaps one degree of separation from APC members. (Collectively, they had 'heard' of all of them.) We found quotes and references from a freedom of expression group from Russia (a branch of GILC), a list of journalists from Southern India (de Waag's Sarai), an information and technology group of some 2000 Bangladeshis (using Yahoo groups), a Spanish women's portal, the Swiss and Paris Indymedia and a quarterly newsletter from a trade union from Minneapolis, USA. It was the 'most read article on information rights' in the online library of the Argentine government's Secretariat on Human Rights secretariat. (The APC researcher was pleased with this finding.) It also provided the sole penetration in the governmental space.

In terms of circulation, significantly, we found that it resonated and moved about in the first 10 days after the press release. The network treated the press release with the attention span normally accorded to it. We noticed a familiar ‘press attention bell-curve’ (see table 4).

The press release also was taken up verbatim by most of the sources. The press release was packaged and ready to go. It was precisely this verbatim circulation that led us back to our thoughts about old media, about its standard formats (press releases), and about the means by which we may judge its effectiveness – verbatim use of the press release in the story. The networks were extremely friendly towards the press release for they took it over verbatim, and passed it on.

One observation troubled us. The press release circulated in a vacuum, in its own trajectory space, in the sense that its re-posters and re-purposers circulated the press release without adding the detail that the *Al-Jazeera* site went back up on 6 April. The 6th of April was the day when the press release about reactions to its downing was circulating the most. The network appeared too busy networking to add that piece of information to the formatted press release. The old media format circulated like a chain letter, without intervention by editors.

Finally, in October 2003, there was the first emergence of network memory, of a life beyond the specific story space. The language of the press release was picked up in an NGO story about World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2004), where APC’s characterization of the Internet was put back into play. (APC is an active participant in the WSIS project.) The actor was outside the APC network.

4. Calendrical and terminological formatting work for (issue) networks

Because the press release did not appear to organize significant networks beyond the social, albeit with one indication of the potential recognition by an issue network actor, we would like to put forward some thoughts of how particular formats organize networks, by beginning with an illustrative story. In particular, we treat how terminological as well as calendrical work may organize not social but ‘issue networks’.

Some years ago we did a research project with a Croatian women’s group, called B.a.B.e (Be active, Be emancipated). B.a.B.e was involved in organizing events, locally, surrounding the more global “Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender Violence”. B.a.B.e. wanted to know whom to invite. They defined the ideal participants as those network actors (analytically and practically speaking) who remained together in the same network space when inter-governmental actors (IGOs) and donors were removed. We devised a method to ascertain these ‘authentic’ actors, whose authenticity (to B.a.B.e.) was based on their independence from IGOs and donors, in network terms. We made a series of ‘gender violence’ issue-network maps, with the Issue Crawler software, where the two most significant ones were a) map of gender violence activists, IGOs and donors; and b) map of gender violence activists, without IGOs and donors. [19]

Among other things, we found that the Croatian group (and its Serbian colleague groups) as well as the women’s group in the United States (based at Rutgers University, and initiators of sixteen days) fit the description. [20]

Whilst doing the research, one researcher also became particularly interested in how the groups had arrived at ‘sixteen days’, instead of the more conventional day, week, month, year, decade. Where the gender violence calendrical work is concerned, arriving at ‘sixteen days’ was a network project. I would like to argue that sixteen days was an ‘issue network’ project – a formatting project to allow an issue network to configure around gender violence. But it is also a particular

type of issue network. Because of existing 'days' on the international calendar as well as days not yet on the international calendar, it is also special (North-South) NGO network inclusivity work, an undertaking that the APC also generally practices.

Here is how the sixteen days calendar is currently filled in, with the seminal beginning and ending dates, with two intervening dates that also require attention. [21]

November 25 is the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This day commemorates the politically active Mirabal sisters who were brutally murdered by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960.

December 1 is World AIDS Day. The twin pandemics of HIV and AIDs are decimating communities globally. Women are more susceptible to infection and are infected at a faster rate than men.

December 6 marks the anniversary of the 'Montreal Massacre', when a man shot and killed 14 women engineering students for "being feminists".

December 10 is recognised as International Human Rights Day. In 1948, on 10 December, governments acknowledged the human rights of all to "life, liberty and the security of person...without distinction of any kind," as they signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I would like to provide some perspective of when each of these days become part of the larger 'sixteen days' calendar, and why (in issue network and other network terms). In 1981 the 25th of November was declared "Day to End Violence against Women" by the first "Feminist

Encuentro” for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Bogota, Colombia (18-21 July). In 1991 the Rutgers University women’s group (CWGL) reformatted the one day as “sixteen days”, to make a bridge to the UN Human Rights Day on 10 December (a day in existence since 1950). [22] It also brought World AIDS Day on 1 December and a ‘lesser’ day from an intergovernmental point of view into the fold (the Montreal Massacre). AIDS Day hales from 1988. A UN press kit summarizes its purpose, in issue network terms (if we were to remove the reference to ‘individuals everywhere’). [23]

The day was envisaged as an opportunity for governments, national AIDS programmes, non-governmental and local organizations, as well as individuals everywhere, to demonstrate both the importance they attached to the fight against AIDS and their solidarity in this effort.

December 6th, the ‘National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women’, was declared by the Canadian government in 1989.

Both 1 December and 6 December were named in a timely fashion (from the point of view of the founding of sixteen days in 1991) and were also calendrically interesting. The other day in that period was considered less so, but may be in future. The 3rd of December is the International Day for the Disabled, but thus far falls outside the Sixteen Days calendar format.

In 1999 the UN finally followed the NGO’s early calendar work by calling the 25th of November the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Symbolically and calendrically, it left no doubt about the UN’s belonging in the issue network. It also points to how calendar work may organize networks consisting of activists, advocates, academics as well as inter-governmental organizations.

In terms of NGO formatting work for networks, 'Sixteen Days' is an effort to move the activists' network into a more classic issue network configuration that would include the inter-governmental organizations, and eventually have the inter-governmentals include them. It is simultaneously a North-South (NGO network) unification effort, where South American murders by right-wing governmental paramilitaries as well as North American domestic violence and the murders of lone gunmen are unified in the same 'violence against women' issue space. The meaning of the B.a.B.e authenticity research project occurred to me only later. B.a.B.e. wanted the event back into the hands of the activists, with IGOs (and donors) removed, or marginalized.

Sixteen Days was an important terminological formatting project. WomenAid (writing in 2002) describes one of the problems before terminological standardization. [24]

Previously, 25 November was observed in Latin America and a growing number of other countries around the world as "International Day Against Violence Against Women".

With no standard title, it was also referred to as "No Violence Against Women Day" and the "Day to End Violence Against Women".

The standardization also changed the word 'women' to 'gender', making the issue space more expansive, inclusive (as well as academic). Violence against men and women of homosexual, bisexual and trans-sexual persuasion could be covered (and studied), as would transvestites, although this has been slow to develop in observed discursive practice.

Sixteen Days, perhaps most importantly, provides a decent calendrical window for event organization. It is also 'franchise-able', by which is meant that one can do it locally. One can

create or download 'kits', 'tool-boxes', 'methodologies' and other contributions to fill and contribute to the days (all of which are major NGO network formats). With them one can do the event, locally, with more global formats, and also export local contributions to the larger network. In hosting the local, globally connected network event and contributing formats, there is also the added incentive that one's presence and well-known-ness can grow in network terms. Instead of relying on the press, the network becomes the means of distributing 'celebrity' for one's issue and organization. That is, networks would distribute individual and organizational celebrity through the network circulation of the kits and the events made possible through franchising. In all, these are the formats that may lead longer, richer lives in new media, issue-oriented networks.

The other format analyzed is the prize (or, more specifically, the prize announcement). One could discuss the APC's Hafkin prize (announcement) as a geographical formatting activity in issue network terms. Its theme – ICT policy in Africa – fits with a focus in donor and inter-governmental circles, as Soros and others now expand their activities into the African space. The prize (announcement) is in keeping with that expansion, not only in the sense that APC, as an established actor in the African NGO issue space, would like to re-assert its presence in that space. But more importantly it desires perhaps to be the major player in the organization of new ICT-related issue networks that have to do with Africa.

The undertaking here, however, concerns whether the prize (announcement) is able to organize a third type of network, beyond the social and the issue. Building stranger networks may be described as the new media equivalent of 'getting out the vote', 'building a social movement', encouraging people 'to join the demonstration' or join the 'sms loop'. [25] The difference is that 'strangers' in our network terms are more likely to be organizations than individuals.

The brief research project into stranger networks concerned the circulation of the prize (announcement), using the same method as the research into the press release about the downing of the *Al-Jazeera* Web site. We sought the name of the prize across a number of search engines, inquiring into its uptake by organizations beyond the ken of the APC. Intriguingly, we found a diverse set of organizations picking up on the prize announcement, perhaps more than half of which were beyond one degree of separation from the APC (see table 5).

Hafkin Prize 2002

Theme: People-Centred Information and Communications

Technology (ICT) Policy in Africa

Criteria:

1. People-Centred and Mobilises Participation
2. Raises Awareness and Builds Capacity
3. Africa Driven and Developing Africa
4. Positive Community Impact

Our preliminary conclusion was that a chosen format indeed may organize a distinctive network. In particular, we are interested in the ‘demographics’ question that has concerned social movement builders, that is, whether NGO networks are able and willing to organize publics as opposed to other NGOs and intergovernmental organizations (with donors included). [26] Indeed, there appears to be a choice between formats to organize a social, issue or stranger network. Our impression was that APC organizes social networks well, and also strives to organize issue networks, though the chosen old media format of a press release (in the particular case studied) was not successful.

5. Is APC a social network or an issue network?

Attending the APC's 2003 annual meeting (in Cartagena, Colombia) afforded us the opportunity to look into how to characterize the APC network. Is it most significantly a social network, issue network or stranger network (or one or more), whereby joining it and being able to work within it has most to do with getting to know each other well (social), with doing professional work on the same issues and in the same forums without knowing each other well (issue), or having only affinities to the work, with the prospect of building a larger network, or perhaps a movement (stranger).

In order to come to an initial understanding of the APC network, two methods were used. The first was the drafting of a questionnaire, sent to all its members with the request of immediate response. (How to format the questionnaire as well as how to phrase the request for immediate responses were matters of some discussion. Once these issues were settled, APC showed its networked-ness by accomplishing response rates unknown in social science. We return to this.)

The second method of determining the nature of the APC network was a physical exercise. With all annual meeting attendees gathered in the room, we asked everyone to get up off their chairs, and stand with the people they know best. The APC members first briefly divided into three groups. As the members glanced at people in the different groups, they all began to cluster together into one group. They all appear to know each other rather well (or at least perform a social network really well).

The second part of the physical exercise was to ask all present to separate into issue areas. First, we thought they would be able to self-organize, but subsequently we decided to call out: gender over there! Development over here! We thought that if the one mass did not separate when asked the second question, APC is a social network. If they reconfigure (significantly), they are an issue network (as well).

Remarkably, something similar happened in the second exercise as in the first. They were able to separate into issue areas, but these were not as distinct as we would have thought. Over a very brief period of time, all present slowly began to cluster together (without creating precisely the same mass as before – there were small differences!).

One explanation (that we found in the analysis of the questionnaire results) is that APC is a specialist in issue-hybridization, a form of terminological formatting (discussed above), with ICTs being the activity that allows them to break into issue areas (gender and ICTs, development and ICTs, human rights and ICTs, etc.), and re-mass anew. The re-massing, we thought, would occur most likely when an issue area subsumes ICTs, thereby no longer requiring hybridization. In this sense, APC pioneers issue hybridization over and again, and almost needs new issue areas to which ICTs may be safely attached (after other issue areas swallow ICTs into it). There is also the scenario whereby ICT becomes an issue in itself, whereby APC would be able to play the role of hybridizer anew. ICTs only? No, there's also ICTs and gender, ICTs and human rights, etc.! This is what transpired in APC's participation in the civil society group of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, December 2003), where APC's publication and the organization of caucuses indicates how terminological work organizes mainly NGO-based issue networks. [27]

From the physical moment, we concluded, in a preliminary fashion, that APC is a social network that is able to give life to issues (in networks) through terminological work that infuses the issues with ICT. Should ICT be the issue itself (as at the World Summit on the Information Society), then APC would be able to rehybridize ICT's into issue areas that would be seen by the summit as unrelated to ICT's in the first instance. Thus APC's networking also relies on its opening and closing of (re-sizable or re-label-able) Chinese boxes, if you will. The largest is ICT's, the next one is gender, the next sustainable development, and onwards. (See figure 2 for a view of how issue hybridization has played out over the past 10 years.)

In the other method to ascertain the nature of the APC network, we formulated a questionnaire. A methodologist and I sat down one evening and devised a simple set of questions, including organization name, mission statement, issue areas, activity key words, current project partners and prospective project partners. (With this last question, we used the term 'hopeful' partners.) Our question format diverged from the APC's. The APC person responsible for sending the questionnaire, and asking for rather immediate responses (given the short time frame of our inquiry), found some of the wording inappropriate and also stressed how busy NGOs are. It is inappropriate to speak in terms of groups with which one would like to work. Importantly, no questionnaire would be answered that took longer than seven minutes! Below is the questionnaire sent to all 34 members of the APC.

At 10:09 PM 10/28/2003, you wrote:

Dear people

One of the workshops here in Cartagena where APC members are gathering for a face to face meeting hosted by Colnodo is working on mapping networks and issues.

As part of this we are working on a project to map the APC community (members and those we work with closely).

PLEASE help us by answering the questions below. We will share what we learn with you. The purpose of this exercise is to help us understand our network and how we can expand and strengthen it.

THANK YOU

Please can you get this back to us.. well.. I am embarrassed to say this.. but more or less immediately :)

Thanks again... and, if people don't have the time to fill in all the questions we will understand and still appreciate even an incomplete response.

Warmest regards from Cartagena

Anriette, Zoltan, Misi

Survey

Name and email of survey respondent:

Please respond in English.

1. Organization Name
2. URL(s)

3. Mission Statement
4. Key Words (Main Issues)
5. Key Words (Main activities/issues)
6. Geographical areas of activities (countries, regions)
7. Network (five main partners/collaborators/funders) [please circle/bold type of relationship]

Partner/Collaborator/Funder 1

Organization name

URL

Project name

Project key words (issues/activities)

[editor's note: The above was repeated four more times]

8. Potential Network (partners/collaborators/funders that you are not working with, but would like to work with)

For each partner/collaborator/funder that you would like to work with:

Potential partner/collaborator/funder 1

Organization name

URL

Key words (issues/activities)

[editor's note: The above was repeated four more times]

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APC Forum is a meeting place for the APC community - people and institutions who are or have been involved in collaboration with APC, and share the APC vision - a world in which all people have easy, equal and affordable access to the creative potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve their lives and create more democratic and egalitarian societies.

apc.forum mailing list

apc.forum@lists.apc.org

<http://lists.apc.org/mailman/listinfo/apc.forum>

We received 31 responses from 34 survey recipients within 24 hours! Most intriguingly, the NGOs were not able to fill in any information for ‘potential’ network. If we are able to discount the survey effect of the item appearing last (which given the seven-minute time prescription may be difficult), one could argue that the networks (and actors) beyond the ken of APC members are either all rather uninteresting, or unknown. We leave the question open whether stranger

network location exercises, thereby, become futile, or more urgent. As APC appears to be a social network actively engaged in being a part of (as opposed to necessarily organizing issue networks), the stranger demographic remains an elusive network subject. Whilst remaining only a hypothesis for now, NGO networks, employing formats found to be unsuitable to organize strangers, may be distinguished from social movements. [28]

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Vocus Public Relations / Release 2.00.446 - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://vocuspri.vocus.com/PRallyPro/ASPPProxy.asp?ProgID=vc&RNUI20.CASPFFrameSet&ProcName=XRFrameSet_Execut&SessionID={E1961A8B-0C1A-49E8-9AAE-AD9B3F94}

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results (23) add to results columns refresh list add export e-mail fax reports udfs

Include	Contact Name	Contact Title	Outlet Name (A)	Contact Address Line 1	Contact City	Contact State	Contact Phone Number	Contact
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Avers, Scott	Reporter	Bellingham Herald	1155 North State Street	Bellingham	WA	(360) 676-2620	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Robinson, Erik	Staff Writer	Columbian, The	701 West 8th Street	Vancouver	WA	(360) 699-6006	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Podsada, Janice	Environmental Writer	Daily Herald	1213 California Street	Everett	WA	(425) 339-3029	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jankowski, Susan	Environmental Editor	Daily Journal Of Commerce	83 Columbia Street	Seattle	WA	(206) 622-8272	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Miller, Scott	Reporter	KING-TV	333 Dexter Avenue, North	Seattle	WA	(206) 448-3864	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lyman, Francesca	Your Environment Columnist	MSNBC.com	11819 73rd Place NE	Kirkland	WA	(425) 823-5127	Consume
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dodge, John	Environment Editor	Olympian	111 Bethel Street, NE	Olympia	WA	(360) 754-5420	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Meisner, Jeff	Staff Writer	Puget Sound Business Journal	12011 Northeast 1st Street	Bellevue	WA	(425) 455-9734x114	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wilhelm, Steve	Staff Writer	Puget Sound Business Journal	720 3rd Avenue	Seattle	WA	(206) 447-8505	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Payne, Jon	Publisher	Radwaste Magazine	1175 Adair Dr	Richland	WA	(708) 579-8227	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lieberman, Larry	Editor/Publisher	Saving Energy	5411 117th Avenue, SE	Bellevue	WA	(425) 643-4248	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	McClure, Robert	Reporter	Seattle Post-Intelligencer	101 Elliot Avenue West	Seattle	WA	(206) 448-8092	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Taylor, Rob	Reporter	Seattle Post-Intelligencer	101 Elliot Avenue West	Seattle	WA	(206) 448-8303	Environme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Anderson, Ross	Staff Reporter	Seattle Times	1120 John Street	Seattle	WA	(206) 464-2200	Environme

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Figure one. Green Media Tool Shed. Meta-data by Vocus Public Relations,
<http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org/public/takeapeak.acs>.



Figure two. APC members' most significant activities, organized by year. Activities appear to 'revolve' more significantly than 'evolve'. Co-occurrence analysis of relationships between member activities and years of activity, using Réseau-Lu by aguidel.com.

Table 1: 19 of 32 APC Members that endorsed the APC press release about aljazeera.net, 4 April 2003.

LaborNet, USA - www.labornet.org
Jinbonet, South Korea - www.jinbo.net
TAU, Argentina - www.tau.org.ar
Wamani, Argentina - www.wamani.org.ar
ComLink, Germany - www.comlink.org
GreenNet, UK - www.gn.apc.org
APC Women's Programme (APC WNSP) - www.apcwomen.org
Institute for Global Communications (IGC), USA - www.igc.org
Fantsuam Foundation, Nigeria - www.fantsuam.com
ChangeNet, Slovakia - www.changenet.sk
RITS, Brazil - www.rits.org.br
LaNeta, Mexico - www.laneta.apc.org
Colnodo, Colombia - www.colnodo.apc.org
Third World Institute (ITeM), Uruguay - www.chasque.apc.org
Pangea, Spain - www.pangea.org
Econnect, Czech Republic - www.ecn.cz
StrawberryNet, Romania - www.sbn.ro
c2o, Australia - www.c2o.org
BlueLink, Bulgaria - www.bluelink.net

Table 2: Actors, known by the APC, that cited the APC's press release about aljazeera.net, 4 April 2003.

www.arabdev.org

www.labornetjp.org

www.crisinfo.org

www.comminit.com

www.kubatana.net

www.ctrlaltesc.org

www.cidadania.org.br

www.isiswomen.org

www.wsisasia.org

www.fma.ph

www.jca.apc.org

www.fitug.de/atlarge-discuss/0304/msg00197.html

www.bbc.co.uk

www.oneworld.net

www.ipsnews.net

Table 3: Actors, not personally known by the APC, who cited the APC press release concerning aljazeera.net, 4 April 2003

groups.yahoo.com/group/bangla_ict/ (Bangladesh ICT Group)

lists.jammed.com/politech/2003/03/0081.html (D. McCullagh)

mail.sarai.net/pipermail/reader-list/ (Sarai)

nuke.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/ (Argentine Gov't Human Rights)

paris.indymedia.org/article.php3?id_article=2598

switzerland.indymedia.org/fr/2003/05/8619.shtml

www.cyberdyaryo.com/features/f2003_0411_01.htm (Philippine media freedom group)

www.e-leusis.net/noticia.asp?id_noticia=786 (Spanish women's portal)

www.flora.org/nowar/forum/old-2448 (Anti-war list)

www.goanet.org/pipermail/goanet/2003-April/001083.html (Latin Cyberfeminists)

<http://www.hro.org/editions/alert/7-3/15.htm> (Russian GILC)

http://www.laborbeat.org/3/uppnet_spr03.pdf (U.S. Labour Union Producers and Programmers)

<http://www.lafil.org/> (French media freedom group)

Table 4: Network resonance of APC press release concerning aljazeera.net, 4 April 2003.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Network Mentions</i>
April 4	3
April 5	5
April 6	8
April 7	4

April 8	3
April 9	3
April 10	2

Table 5: Sites/organizations, unknown to the APC, reposting the Hafkin Prize

Announcement

<http://server.africapolicy.org/docs02/ict0211.htm>

http://spore.cta.int/spore96/esporo46_brief.html

<http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/elecnet.html>

http://www.123africa.com/fr/index.php3?cat_id=249&page=2

<http://www.adital.org.br/asp2/>

<http://www.africaonline.com/site/fr/africa/internet.html>

<http://www.afrique-info.net/page/index.php?num=22&p=3>

<http://www.biodiversidadla.org/article/articleview/2485/1/15...>

<http://www.bu.edu/africa/about/alumni/index.html>

<http://www.cads-sierraleone.org/civicusupdates165.htm>

http://www.digitaldividend.org/digest/digest_01.htm

http://www.dti.gov.za/saitis/Initiatives/List_current.htm

<http://www.esnet.be/communs/e-nx/e-nx17.html>

<http://www.gsdi.org/docs/SDIA/sdiav1n3.txt>

<http://www.iafric.net/benin/histong.htm>

<http://www.macommune.be>

<http://www.mail-archive.com/gainsnet>

<http://www.malilink.net/archive2002-1/1416.html>

<http://www.nilebasin.com/discus/messages/20/5446.htm>

<http://www.osiris.sn/article323.html>

[http://www.refer.sn/.](http://www.refer.sn/)

<http://www.schoolnet.na/news/archives.html>

<http://www.seul.org/edu/report83.html>

<http://www.woyaaonline.com/linksfr/PAYS/>

<http://br.groups.yahoo.com/group/proarteclipsPORT/message/90>

<http://br.geocities.com/inations/pworld.htm>

http://lists.copyleft.no/pipermail/fair_software/2002-

[November/000012.html](http://lists.copyleft.no/pipermail/fair_software/2002-November/000012.html)

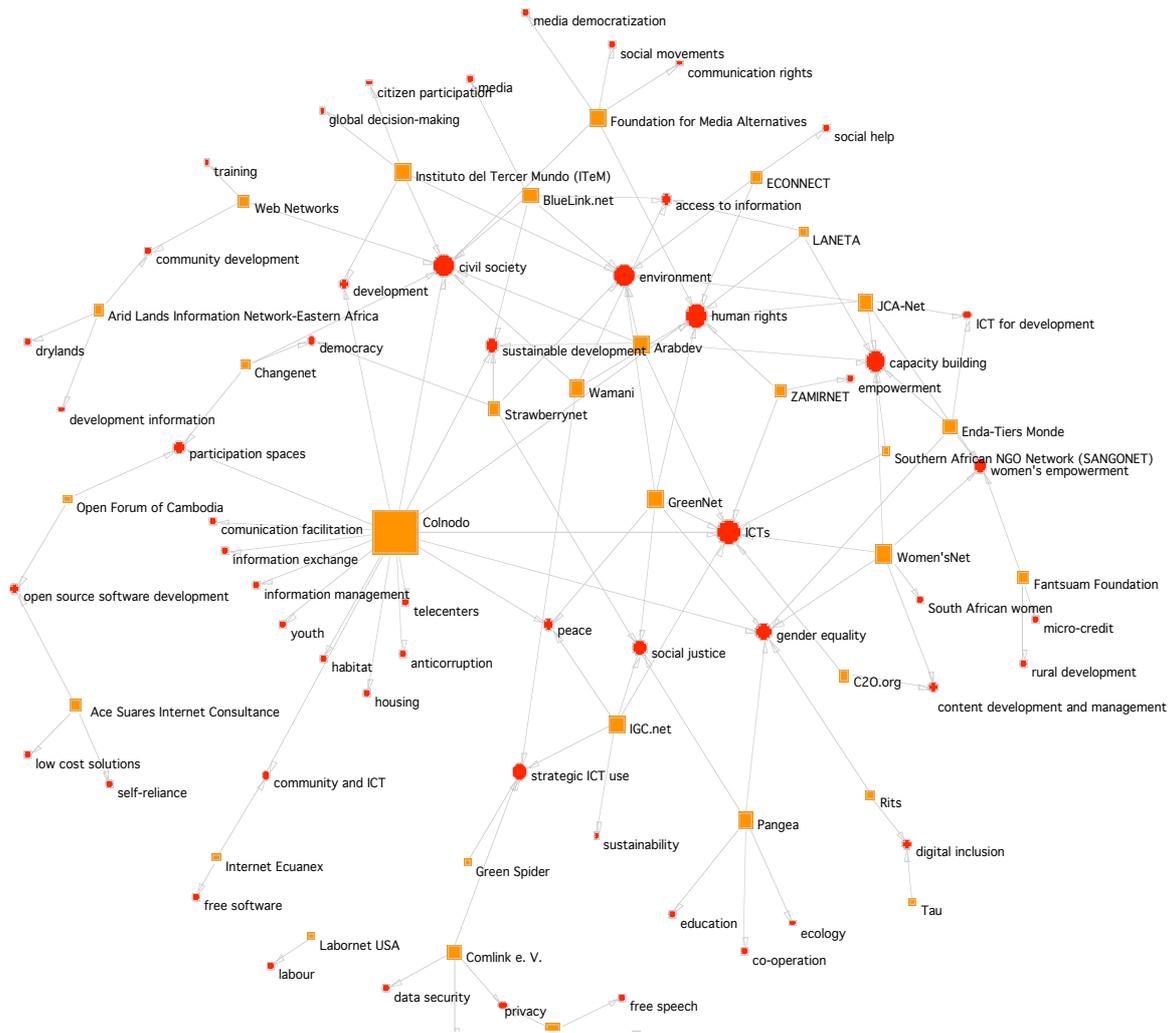


Figure three. APC Members clustering around member activities, per October 2003. Co-occurrence analysis of relationships between members and activities from survey results, using Réseau-Lu by aguidel.com.

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