Driving citizenship to connected aged population at digital inclusion program ACESSASP – Brazil

Digital Inclusion Program in Brazil

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Abstract

Digital inclusion programs contribute to promote a revolution regarding Internet access. WEB 2.0 platform democratization of access is increasing the opportunities to build digital citizenship. In Brazil one of the most important initiatives is AcessaSP Digital Inclusion Program, awarded in 2013 by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a kind of digital inclusion Nobel, that recognizes innovative efforts worldwide to connect people. AcessaSP is a digital inclusion program, which is now 15 years old and already reached 80 million users in almost 850 infocenters in operation, developed by São Paulo state government in partnership with Research Center for New Communications Technologies Applied to Education – School of the Future / USP. This paper presents AcessaSP and discusses some results concerning connected aged populations practices as users of AcessaSP infocenters. The study was carried out as a comparative survey with statistical data collected in 2008, 2009 and 2012 based on a SPSS database originally developed to provide AcessaSP program with statistical data. Main results point an exponential participation in social networks and significant appropriation of WEB 2.0 tools, suggesting aged population empowerment.

*Keywords***:** Digital Inclusion Public Policy in São Paulo – Brazil; Digital Inclusion Program AcessaSP – Brazil; Research Center for New Communications Technologies Applied to Education – School of the Future / USP – Brazil; Connected Aged Population; MIL – Media and Information Literacy; e-Citizenship; Empowerment.

The Research Center for New Communications Technologies Applied to Education – School of the Future / USP

The Research Center for New Communications Technologies Applied to Education – School of the Future / USP (EF/USP) began it is activities in 1989. In January 1993 it was instituted as a Research Center, an entity under the control of the Dean's Office for University Research Studies. Since its inauguration its mission has been to improve education in Brazil through the introduction of ICTs (Information and Communications Technology) and WEB networking into formal and non-formal learning and teaching environments.

In order to do so EF/USP developed a partnership model involving university, society and different research funding agencies and government spheres to fund action research projects. Initially, it was funded by seventy research scholarships provided by CNPq (Brazilian National Research Agency) and, over the past twenty

years, it has gained additional financing from other official research agencies as FAPESP (State of São Paulo Research Foundation) and CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior), Brazilian Federal Agency for the Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education, as well as through agreements and contracts with both private and state-run institutions.

With its projects and research activities, the objective of EF/USP is to implement innovative proposals that contribute to the reconfiguration of learning and teaching processes, through the use Internet, multimedia, social media and transmedia resources. Accordingly, its operational activities are guided by core principles such as a commitment to research and the evaluation of different educational strategies and the application of academic research to classroom practice. Besides promoting the exchange of practices and knowledge among educators of national and international academic institutions, EF/USP also contributes for the development of a new generation of educators, who consider the interface among education, communication and information to be a fertile ground for collective knowledge construction.

In September 2006 the scientific coordination of EF/USP gained new management directives, shifting the focus to projects and programs that incorporate digital technology into formal and non- formal education and citizenship initiatives, as well as the development of empirical research projects on social networks and their impacts on the areas of communication, education and information. Projects implemented by EF/USP are based on the action research model, which brings together the subject and the object of research. The researcher is inserted into the population group involved in the research and all involved participants take part on the process of knowledge creation (Thiollent, 1986,p.14).

Understanding media universe and new ways of learning, teaching and producing knowledge in this context requires qualitative and quantitative studies regarding the impacts of ICT on contemporary life. In an attempt to illuminate new aspects of the "network society" EF/USP instituted in 2007 the Digital Culture Observatory devoted to empirical research whose purposes are to investigate emerging MIL (Media and Information Literacy) on WEB 2.0 environments focusing on the concept of literacy as a set of social practices as proposed by different researchers and more recently as MIL. It is also of interest the individual and collective production of knowledge in network environments and, therefore, new forms of authorship inspired on digital collectives and "other network players" at

the intersection of convergent hybrid frontiers of today's connected society.

A usual research methodology at EF/USP is virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000) and / or netnography (Kozinets, 2010) to investigate new behaviors and MIL among cyberculture actors.

The Hyperconnected Contemporary Society and the Will for Change

Cultural contemporary platforms support the emergence of new logics, semantics and literacies (set of abilities and/or skills established due to the use of different technologies) in a society that do not involves anymore the transmitter-receiver duality of the last century. Communication theorists are now situated in a "new economy" locus, which presupposes the reciprocity of communication actions, new business models and new practices (Passarelli; Junqueira, 2012).

In a convergent environment of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), its "actors-network" as proposed by Latour (2005), use hypertext, multimedia, interactivity, *wikis*, blogs, *personas*, social networks and folksonomies, conceiving them as transforming agents in a play where producer and consumer are shaped in the picture of *prosumer* (Tofler, 1980) and in the consequently redefinition of their roles in a connected society.

To better understand the hyperconnected society of today it is mandatory to investigate new forms of thinking to reconfigurate social relationships regarding all areas of human activity from education to communication , from new economy to new ethics to name a few. Considering the revolutionary scenario implemented with the rise of Internet and most recently with the Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data, many initiatives from different backgrounds as academic, government and civil society are taking place to enlighten the contemporary society profile.

Considering government and civil societies initiatives it is important to mention the European Commission and UNESCO that have been working for years and in 2014 realized the first European Forum on MIL occurred in May, 27-28, 2014 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, organized by the European Commission and UNESCO and co-organized by EMEDUS Project and the Office of Comunicación y Educación of Open University of Barcelona. The forum brought together representatives of governments, experts, authorities of the audio-visual, teachers, professionals in the media, representatives of industry, information

professionals, librarians, researchers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others, with the objective to promote broad discussion in Europe about the importance of an education for media literacy in addition to the suggestion of policies and initiatives in transnational partnerships on the theme to develop policies fostering the inclusion of media education in the European curriculum at basic education. Furthermore, it aims to promote the expansion of literacy for the media to not-formal and informal education including underserved communities as well as people with disabilities. The initiative[1] also intended to create international platforms for collaboration as the European Chapter of the Global Alliance for Partners on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) and the European Media and Film Literacy Observatory among others.

As active participants of the hyperconnected society prospecting and understanding emerging digital literacies among Brazilian users in digital inclusion public programs becomes a duty to enhance education, culture and citizenship. The development of a perspective that links intervention projects on digital inclusion and emerging literacies to empirical research enables EF/USP both to act on and to evaluate the historical, social and economic context in which they occur. This double articulation favors feedback among projects and research activities, and helps to shed some light on the new format of contemporary life. By articulating this duality among projects and research activities this paper reports and discuss main findings regarding emerging digital literacies among aged population participant of the state o São Paulo digital inclusion program named AcessaSP[2].

AcessaSP Digital Inclusion Program

Financing Institution: PRODESP - Public Management Department of São Paulo State Government

Under the coordination of PRODESP (São Paulo State Data Processing Company) and in conjunction with São Paulo State Government, EF-USP is the official developer of the virtual environment and both face-to-face and virtual education to foster digital inclusion and social protagonism to low income population. Since

[1] In depth info can be reached at: http://www.europeanmedialiteracyforum.org/2014/03/launch-of-first-european-media-literacy.html
[2] AcessaSP Digital Inclusion Program: http://www.acessasp.sp.gov.br .

its birth the program has become the most distinguished digital inclusion program in the state of São Paulo and it has become a reference nationwide. AcessaSP Digital Inclusion Program main indicators are: 15 years of operational history; more than 80.000.000 people impacted; 3.000.000 registered users; 846 AcessaSP infocenters currently operating; 645 counties served; more than 1.100 mediators trained.

Instituted in July 2000, AcessaSP digital inclusion program creates and maintain public spaces called service kiosks or infocenters, staffed by trained instructors who mediate unrestricted and free access to internet, thus contributing to the social, cultural, intellectual and economic development of low income citizens in the state of São Paulo - Brazil.

Figure 01 – AcessaSP Infocenter: Panoramic View

AcessaSP digital inclusion program has two different types of infocenters. The project is implemented in counties in conjunction with local governments and can be presented in different formats as: in county libraries; in Poupatempo public services center, the Bom Prato community restaurants, bus terminals, train and subway stations and State Government offices.

Besides the creation and maintenance of public internet access centers, AcessaSP also produces digital and non-digital content. It also carried out a website and virtual actions that contribute to the conscious use of the internet and other new technologies, as well as other community projects that use information technology.

Figure 02 – AcessaSP Website: First Page Print

acessasp
ISO 9001
Empresa Certificada
GOVERNO DO ESTADO SÃO PAULO
SOBRE
BLOG
CURSOS
REDE DE PROJETOS
ACESSA CIDADE
CATÁLOGO DE POSTOS
CONTATO
Encontros Regionais 2015
Bora pra Botucatu!
Vamos nos encontrar?
Partiu projetistas, monitores e comunidades. :)
[Encontro Regional]
Os Encontros Regionais do Acessa SP estão de volta!
Encontro Regional de 2015 traz Empreendedorismo Social como tema
Os Encontros Regionais do Acessa SP estão de volta! Neste ano, seis regiões do Estado receberão o evento, entre elas, Botucatu, Cananéia, São Sebastião ou Ilha Bela, Jaboticabal, Vargem Grande do Sul e Capital. O Encontro Regional é um evento gratuito. O primeiro encontro será em Botucatu, nos dias 28 [...]
Leia mais →
Comunidades rurais paulistas contam com internet gratuita do Acessa SP
O Acessa SP aprimora seu conceito de inclusão digital e oferece o Acessa Rural – postos com internet gratuita e conteúdo de qualidade nas comunidades rurais. Existem no estado de São Paulo mais de mil comunidades rurais: 250 delas com população acima de 500 habitantes. "Investimos no Acessa Rural e [...]
Leia mais →
Setor público tem mais de 11 mil vagas para estágio; Prazo para inscrição vai até 22 de abril
Estão abertas as inscrições para estágio no setor público estadual. São 11.065 oportunidades para estudantes de níveis superior, técnico e médio. O processo é realizado por meio da Fundap (Fundação do Desenvolvimento Administrativo) e o prazo de inscrição vai até 22 de abril. O valor da bolsa varia conforme o [...]
Leia mais →
APP Acessa SP
Disponível para:
Available on the App Store
Google play
Clique aqui e saiba +
Vencedor do prêmio Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation "Acesso ao Conhecimento 2013"
Acessa SP em números
Cadastros: 2.997.759
Atendimentos: 80.389.243
Acessos wi-fi: 1.263.188
Visitas ao portal: 50.972.339
Postos ativos: 847
Em implantação: 208
Municípios atendidos: 645
Projeto Ciência Hoje: 1.309
Rede de Projetos
Estratégia de inclusão digital do Programa Acessa SP que estimula a formação de uma rede de monitores e projetistas baseada na elaboração de projetos locais.
Minicursos
O lugar certo para aprender sobre os mais variados temas agora com a parceria do Sebrae-SP e do Banco do Povo, fortalecendo o empreendedorismo. Aproveite!
Conheça os Cadernos Eletrônicos
Eu me lembro
Você lembra de alguma situação legal? Algo engraçado? Chocante? Conte para gente! O Projeto 'Eu Me Lembro' busca resgatar as nossas memórias através dos relatos que marcaram nossas vidas.
Acessa Ambiental Rural
SICAR São Paulo
ponline2014
Pesquisa online com usuários do Programa Acessa SP
Encontre-nos no Facebook
Programa Acessa São Paulo
Curtir
16.766 pessoas curtiram Programa Acessa São Paulo.
@EF_USP
PRODESP
GOVERNO DO ESTADO SÃO PAULO
Acessa São Paulo
Acessa São Paulo é o programa de inclusão digital do Governo do Estado de São Paulo, coordenado pela Secretaria Estadual de Governo, com gestão da Prodesp, Companhia de Processamento de Dados do Estado de São Paulo - Diretoria de Serviços ao Cidadão. Instituído em julho de 2000, o Programa
GOVERNO DO ESTADO SÃO PAULO

The AcessaSP Digital Inclusion Program was awarded several prizes and the last was awarded in 2013 by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a kind of digital inclusion Nobel, that recognizes innovative efforts worldwide to connect people. AcessaSP was chosen as the best digital inclusion program among 300 projects from 56 countries.

The Netnographic Study with AcessaSP Aged Participants

Since 2002, AcessaSP implemented PONLINE - a SPSS data manager that employs a free software online questionnaire *Limesurvey* to develop monthly surveys. PONLINE has a friendly and accessible online interface and allows searches with the use of different filters such as gender, socioeconomic status, education level, etc. It is possible to create relationships among posts and view and compare different audiences and regional standards in the form of graphs and tables. Reports can be edited both online and printed.

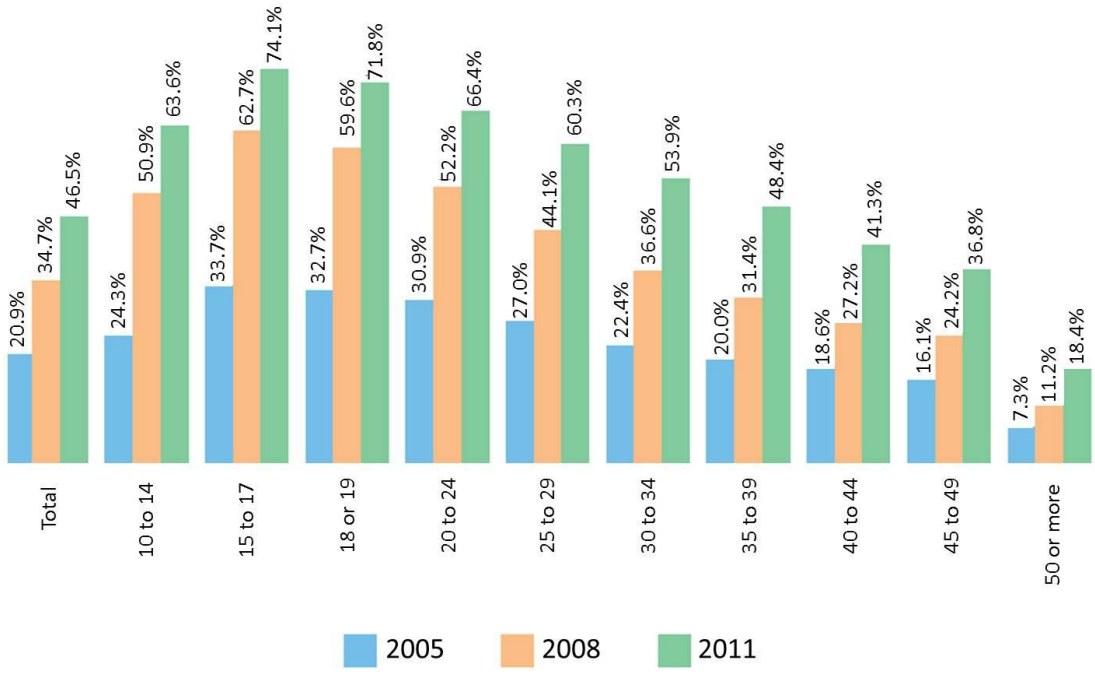
Figure 03 – AcessaSP WEBsite: PONLINE Page Print

Attitudes and Behaviors of AcessaSP Aged Participants: A Comparative Study (2008, 2009 and 2012)

According to the last National Survey of Households (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios – PNAD)[3] focused on Internet access and cell phone possession for personal use (2011) conducted by IBGE (Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics), increased the connected population of ages 50 and above, from 7.3% in 2005 to 11.2% in 2008 and 18.4% in 2011. To better understand the behavior of aged participants in digital environments, this study aims to map and identify their participation based on PONLINE comparative data (years 2008, 2009 and 2012).

[3] Accessible at: ftp://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Acesso_a_internet_e_posse_celular/2011/PNAD_Inter_2011.pdf

Figure 04 – According to Age Groups: Percentage of people who used the Internet in the last 3 months among 10 years old and over - Brazil - 2005/2011



A set of questions concerning attitudes and behaviors of aged people participants of AcessaSP infocenters were developed with PONLINE. Main results so far indicate that behavior, uses, and digital literacies among the aged population at AcessaSP are increasing, as well as connectivity and digital communication practices.

Figure 05 – AcessaSP Infocenter: Aged Participant

Regarding the interest and use of online government services, it was observed a significant increase in some of them, and a decrease in others, which indicates the absence of a standard trend. The services that show an increase in use are as follows: a) the program Nota Fiscal Paulista (Sao Paulo Tax Receipt) from the Sao Paulo State Revenue Office (40% in 2009 and 54% in 2012); b) the issue of criminal records (14% in 2008, 18% in 2009 and 2012); c) information about municipal taxes (14% in 2008, 15% in 2009 and 16% in 2012). Conversely, the following services show a decrease in use: a) information on the Individual Taxpayer Registry (CPF) (40% in 2008, 30% in 2009 and 30% in 2012), b) Income Tax declarations (52% in 2008, 42% in 2009 and 37% in 2012) and c) Police Incident Reports (11% in 2008, 7% in 2009 and 2012).

Between 2008 and 2012, there was an increase in the percentage of those who learned how to use Internet sources on their own (from 17% to 18% in the considered period) and of those who learned to use them with the help of family members (from 4% to 8%). Tutor support in the learning process decreased from 54% (in 2008) to 34% (in 2009 and 2012). In the same period, we also observed an increase in the percentage of participants in Internet skills courses (20% in 2008, 30% in 2009 and 34% in 2012).

The exponential participation in social networks such as Facebook and the posting of videos on YouTube show a growing and significant appropriation of WEB 2.0 tools. The use of chat programs and the creation and updating of blogs, Twitter and other sites are also highly relevant. All the above-mentioned set of literacies

helps develop non-linear narratives that are typical of cyberculture, representing the interests and habits of aged networked actors in Brazil.

The percentage of aged people who declared not to own a computer at home decreased from 59% (2008) to 56% (2009) and 42% (2012). The existence of only one computer at home also increased from 34% to 39%, reaching 47%, respectively. As we can see those who own a computer still continue to visit AcessaSP infocenters, which indicates that AcessaSP infocenters are also a cultural space that goes beyond internet access providing social activities and networking.

The most frequent communication activities performed by AcessaSP aged participants in the analyzed period are as follows: a) send and receive emails (79% in 2008 to 84% in 2009 and 2012); b) use instant messaging to chat (21% in 2008, 30% in 2009 and 50% in 2012); c) scrap chat (12% in 2008, 15% in 2009 and 34% in 2012); d) participate in chat rooms (6% in 2008 to 15% in 2009 and 2012); e) create or update blogs or websites (8% in 2008, 12% in 2009 and 2012); f) participate in discussion lists or forums (6% in 2008, 8% in 2009 and 9% in 2012); g) chat using voice messaging programs (3% in 2008, 11% in 2009 and 12% in 2012).

Research results also show an increase in participation in various social networks such as Facebook and YouTube. The massive growth of social network participation went from 27% in 2008, to 57% in 2009, reaching 68% in 2012. It is important to point out the ever growing number of Facebook participants (60%). Regarding YouTube posts, the percentage of aged participants went from 2% in 2008, to 9% in 2009, reaching 11% in 2012. The increase in content production and posting also indicate the gain in autonomy and MIL among the studied population.

Final Considerations

We can identify two major "waves" in the last two decades in the networked society. The first one relates to the development and implementation of digital inclusion government policies to offer free and unlimited access to the Internet to low-income population. Brazil as a whole and, in particular, the state government of Sao Paulo developed a very extensive digital inclusion program. As in other initiatives, the first stages of AcessaSP digital inclusion program focused on

providing connection infraestructure and teaching participants how to browse the net. These early days were very important to help develop a sense of social and digital inclusion to low income population. The second wave began to emerge in 2006, after we reached a sustainable rate of digital inclusion. Researchers at School of the Future – USP consider that the mapping and understanding of emerging of MIL – media and information literacies among connected population, as shown in this paper, are of vital importance to better understand new behaviors and attitudes of the connected contemporary society.

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