

Focus :

INNOVATION

CONFERENCE

[AP12]

Room Mother Teresa  
Palais Brongniart

Thursday, Septembre  
20, 2012

## WHAT STAKES FOR THE INTERNET IN SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT?

### MAIN FINDINGS

Today, many utopias originate from the internet, such as those on political life and urban planning. Activist movements from the domains of sustainable development, inclusive development and the social solidarity economy have made little use of it, however. A glance at the history of the internet reveals it to be a sort of utopia manufacturing machine, even by looking no further than the concepts behind the workings and protocols of the net itself. These provide renewed vigour for the values of cognitive equality and freedom, particularly through the act of browsing. Nonetheless, many decide not to consider the internet as having a political nature nor as being a tool for gathering together and structuring activists. This can be seen as a mistake, since renewed modernity involves us learning to piece apart the market economy in order to rebuild it differently, taking into account human, social and personal development, without denying any of these aspects.

### SPEAKERS

**Doris Bruyas**

Co-director, Fréquence Ecoles

**Jean-Louis Frechin**

Founder and Director, Nodesign /Director of  
prospective and innovation, ENSCI

**Valérie Peugeot**

Foresight Studies Project Manager, Orange Labs /  
President, Vecam

**Jean-Baptiste Soufron**

General Secretary of Conseil national du  
numérique

### MODERATOR

**Philippe Lemoine**

Chairman, Forum d'Action Modernités

## SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS

### The digital spirit – or the third industrial revolution

For **Jean-Louis Frechin**, the twentieth century was a permanent quest for the consumption of goods that came out of the mastering of energy. Today, in the information and exchange era, the digital revolution, or digital spirit, is transforming aesthetics and predetermining the way we act. Human beings are increasingly becoming users as opposed to consumers, thus bringing us back to the Bauhaus legend and reindustrialisation. What is more, the immensity of the network can create self-fulfilment and empowerment. The internet presents two contradictory façades: the first is adorned with an outward appearance of a humanistic, alternative utopia, resulting from its origins on the campus, while the second is simply that of a marketplace. As for how it is used however, the internet is a complex space which brings together and puts to life these two aspects. Furthermore, this digital spirit is starting to penetrate businesses, allowing them to get more done at a faster pace. This is in turn leading to the creation of a new social facet to business, as defended by Armand Hatchuel and exemplified by social businesses which are profit-making in the United States. We are witnessing a coming together of new production tools, new services, a change in scale and the democratisation of technology. This is heralding the third industrial revolution, which is transforming the way in which products are manufactured around the world, bringing in the thought chain to vie with the supply chain.

### Towards communities of shared goods

**Valérie Peugeot** highlights the fact that the great split between the capitalist digital world and the solidarity digital world is similar to the ancient opposition between the public and private sectors. Before this schism took place, the social solidarity economy was at best a way of smoothing down the rough edges of unequal capitalism and a way of making up for what public powers were lacking. With the onset of the digital spirit, a whole host of new stakeholders and initiatives have started to appear; ones which are breaking down the strict two-way relationship between the State and the market while introducing new ways of

doing politics and economics. These emerging communities are, as a matter of fact, communities of shared property such as those put forward by Elinor Ostrom, the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Economics. One example of these shared property communities in the digital sector is that of free software, the creators of which have a unique relationship with the property. Other similar examples to be mentioned are Wikipedia, CouchSurfing or the crowdsourced map service, OpenStreetMap, all of which use bottom-up property rights. A movement should be created around bestowing citizens with greater digital capabilities, since digital media require greater cognitive and cultural capacities from the individual, meaning that this is an area of stark inequalities. It is here that the social solidarity economy has a role to play, given its tradition of educating the masses.

### Responding to the digital use divide through national and popular education

**Dorie Bruyas** raises the alarm regarding the belief commonly held by the media in France on the subject of education, which says that digital use and practices are very much widespread among young people. As a matter of fact, there is a digital divide in terms of use – 97% of households with children aged between 9 and 16 are equipped with a computer. If a child is aided in his/her digital experiences, he/she will make the computer tool their own and make use of it later on in life in a strategic way. To the contrary, those young people who have not been able to benefit from adapted accompaniment in their computer use will remain marginalised from the possibilities. In schools, it is difficult to set up digital education: beyond the issue of resources, the real obstacle is the fact that the education system is challenged by the digital sphere. In popular education, the problem is no easier: although dialogue with the CNAJEP (Committee for the National and International Relations of Youth and Community Education Associations) shows that they do indeed understand the benefits and potential change that the digital sector could bring about, implementing these changes is a different issue. Finally, it is of concern the fact that neither national nor popular education provide young people with accompaniment in their digital practices, especially because use does not automatically engender competence.

## Internet as a new opportunity to reveal potential

According to **Jean-Baptiste Soufron**, we should remain modest on this issue because the digital sphere is only going through its initial phase. In some ways, digital technology allows us more opportunities, and thus a greater openness, particularly in terms of learning. We can even expect individualised learning to appear, in line with the personalised sales techniques used on some websites. Choices online are large, as exemplified by online music, and social networks increase the knowledge that we share among us. In fact, these opportunities mean that some individuals will have the chance to shine. Indeed, talent is reliant upon opportunities and resources being created. By way of example, Mozart would not have been Mozart if the piano had not already been invented. In this way, given that amateur photos are more easily shared and more highly valued thanks to digital devices, more people may discover a flair for photography, a talent, special

expertise – all thanks to the opportunity for greater democracy that the internet represents.

## SUMMARY OF DEBATE WITH THE AUDIENCE

### Are there initiatives similar to crowdfunding, in which digital technology allows the social solidarity economy to be developed?

**Valérie Peugeot** answers that on an operational level, crowdfunding is of great interest both for the conventional market and for the social solidarity economy. One groundbreaking example in creating new types of solidarity is OpenStreetMap. Thanks to this initiative, during the Haiti earthquake, huge internet user participation allowed people to find refugee camps, to locate collapsed buildings, etc., using a truly collaborative and bottom-up approach.

## REPORTER

Linda Bouifrou  
RehMed/Resci

## MORE ON THIS TOPIC

- Philippe Aigrain, Daniel Kaplan (2012). *Internet peut-il casser des briques ? : un territoire politique en jachère*, Éditions Descartes et Cie.
- Ulrich Beck (2001). *La société du risque : Sur la voie d'une autre modernité*, Éditions Aubier. (Edition originale : *Risikogesellschaft*, Francfort, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986)
- Elinor Ostrom (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, Cambridge University Press.
- Bernard Stiegler (2008). *Économie de l'hypermatériel et psychopouvoir. Entretiens avec Philippe Petit et Vincent Bontems*, Editions Mille et une nuits.
- **Bauhaus Dessau** : [www.bauhaus-dessau.de](http://www.bauhaus-dessau.de)
- **OpenStreetMap** : [www.openstreetmap.org](http://www.openstreetmap.org)