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# INFLUENCE ON THE INTERNET

Perceptions and influence mecanisms on internet in an emergency society







Its existence can never be more than short and uncertain. It either conquers others, and changes its situation, or it is conquered and becomes nothing. Only insignificance or greatness can keep it free. No fixed relation can be stated between the extent of territory and the population that are adequate one to the other, both because of the differences in the quality of land, in its fertility, in the nature of its products, and in the influence of climate, and because of the different tempers of those who inhabit it; for some in a fertile country consume little, and others on an ungrateful soil much.» The social contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau

# **ABSTRACT**

One of the most important means of the influence on internet is to impose people to follow an hypertext and cognitive track. The purpose is to persuade them to support the propositions they face and to relay them. By using the sorts of influence, this article aims at analysing the questions that follows: How to influence their perception? How to impose a specific representation of a topic? Then, how to justify it to a large readership? In a fast media-saturated world, it is to be made by individual and collective behaviours of the webusers at a time of social networks.

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Didier Heiderich, Editions Observatoire International des Crises

http://www.communication-sensible.com/download/influence-sur-internet-didier-heiderich.pdf

# **MICROFLUENCE**

Lots of different authors published many research work in order to define what influence is about. The models that we are proposed with come from differences between three main propositions.

Thus, influence can be analysed depending on the different kinds of actors:

- those who have a power of influence, and those who are under influence (individuals, companies, State...),
- the purpose of the influence (marketing, politics but also controling, spreading, persuading, inspiring<sup>1</sup>...),
- the means of influence (spontaneous influence, rational influence or influence based on information<sup>2</sup>).

As a general rule, the work on the influence takes into consideration the will to influence when it comes from strong signals regarded as social, political or psychological acting methods.

But, in the cyberspace, in case that we can find these strategies of influences, whatever the direction we focus on,

whatever the direction we focus

François-Bernard Huyghe TECHNIQUES DE

http://www.huyghe.fr/actu 495.htm, 2007

L'INFLUENCE,

internet seems to be a magma of influence. In addition, it is often guided by the satisfaction of an immediate need, in competition between individuals on a certain number of topics.



Is internet life-like?

spectacular and multifaced complexity of the internet reacts to the diverse stimuli and seems to have certain similarities to an heterogeneous living organism. In addition to the weblog phenomenon, used without imagination by firms and politicians, there is a cataloa of means which transform the internet in a complex and organical dynamic system: publishing, writing, arguing, transmitting, copying, pasting, deleting, exchanging. The influence is exerted through diversity according to specific internet principles, which can be summed up as flollows.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Natacha Romma, Eric Boutin *LES STRATEGIES D'INFLUENCE SUR INTERNET : VALIDATION EXPERIMENTALE SUR LE LOBBY ANTINUCLEAIRE*, <a href="http://isdm.univ-tln.fr/PDF/isdm22/isdm22">http://isdm.univ-tln.fr/PDF/isdm22/isdm22</a> romma.pdf, île Rousse 2005, Journée sur les systèmes d'information élaborée, page 17

# THE HOTCHPOTCH

As an individual mass media (Manuel Castells, 2006)<sup>3</sup>, the influence is exerted through internet according modes which combine all the propositions made above. Thus, the internet world can be excessively complexe and away from the move classical digarams of the influence. Internet is both collection and syncretism, that is to say an unfinished puzzle or weird coalitions of ideas, beliefs composites doctrines. This confusion,

owing to the fact it is very much flexible, cannot obey

to any will.

# **EMERGENCY**

The internet sphere is entirely devoted to emergency cult, to instant enhancement. to the immediate satisfaction of the needs4. It makes the anxiety of the webuser keep going and forces him

to be in a never-ending motion between euphoria and dysphoria, between pleasant experience unpleasant one. Answering to this emergency as well as to the anxiety is a mean of influence particularly present in the cyberspace. But from this view point, influence is likely to occur by chance due to the fact that it works on the immediate satisfaction of a physical or psychological need. Thus, part of their feelings (including new familiarities which don't escape social judgment) is laid bare to everyone.

# LIVING TOGETHER

« Internet is both

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Internet is a place where are gathered lots of elements, communities of ideas or alike but above all communities of beliefs. These communities don't share a common culture but codes and

boundaries which

compartimentalize discernment. Within this extreme normalized framework. the influence is limited Zeitaeist satisfaction, specific to each community. But since there are plenty of communities in the cyberspace, internet world is made myriads propositions divided

by as many uncertainties due to the lack of real coherence. Influence seems to be at the crossroads of the uncertainties, in the "confrontations of the uncertainties" (Edgar Morin 2005), which is a source of innovation. As a matter of fact, the most important influence seems to be the one which transcends codes and customs of these communities separated by bridges beetween different propositions<sup>5</sup>.

2006. http://www.mondediplomatique.fr/2006/08/CASTELLS/13744

<sup>3</sup> Manuel Castells, *Emergence des « médias de* 

masse individuels », Le Monde diplomatique, août

http://faculty.chicagogsb.edu/ronald.burt/teaching/1 2brokerage.pdf

<sup>5</sup> Ronald S. Burt, *Creating Value: The Social* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For instance, the Pew Internet & American Life Project web site published in 2007 an analysis named "Information searches that solve problems" carried out by 2 796 people. The result is that 58 % of them used internet to solve their problem (76 % of the people were connected with internet).

Capital of Growth and Innovation, Chicago GSB, nouvelle version 2008.

### **INFERENCE**

In the internet emergency, different stimuli lead thinking to consider as true a serie of teneous assertions in order to come to a conclusion, which in the same time leads people to accept influence. These different stimuli come as much from propositions as symbols (text, images, videos, little game

software) which can be named micromedia. The more people face identical stimuli, the more they will be bound to make it part of themselves.

Whatsoever, internet is the very place where micromedia is repeated and used as

a lego game, due to the many copy and paste processes. But the proliferation of the number of micromedias don't necessarily make sense and the whole isn't necessarily exhaustive. From this point of view, the scope of influence on the net is most often limited to the satisfaction of an immediate need.

## **PANURGISM**

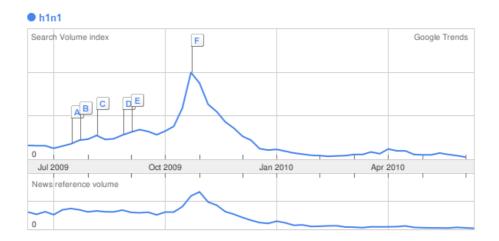
Paradoxically, despite its spectacular complexity, the cyberspace mainly

seems to have a sway over simple or even simplistic items. Moreover, despite the presumed great power of internet, the agenda keeps beeing chosen by the classical massmedia (TV, press magazine). One can easily check the link

between the media agenda and the research made on the internet (fig.1).

"The more people face identical stimuli, the more they will be bound to make it part of themselves."

Fig. 1 : comparison between the quantity of news posted on Google news and the quieries done on the Google search engine with the key word H1N1.



# SOCIAL INDIVIDUALISM

Internet is the archetype of a social pratice focused on people. One of the Grails of online influence, in other words viral marketing, results from the capacity to enhance people by transfering a piece of information to

their network thanks a simple copy and paste operation. The influence the on internet mainly consists to encourage webuser to do micro media "сору and paste" operations. But then, there is a difficulty, specific to cyberspace : the risk of the signal deperdition damage during the 'copy and paste' something operation, that musn't be underestimated. Thus, using influence on the internet demands, more than anywhere

being of one's else, deprived personnality for the sake of the self realisation of the individual. But it also demands the acceptance of the risk of protest and rejection. Whoever the user is, institutionnal or individual, internet is a "common good", inside which he must find his place like in any other organization, even a dominant one. From this viewpoint, the webuser freely, sometimes in can choose contradiction with himself in the multi personnality of the ego formed by as metamorphosis as moods, between euphoria and dysphoria, once more.

#### **NEW MEMORIES**

Internet has the characteristic to keep datas for a long time, even though the

who transmitted the person information isn't aware of it. Even when the datas seem to be deleted in their original web site, they still exist, deep inside numerical mazes, and can re-emerge at any time<sup>6</sup>. But beyond these lures, internet produces new memories, just like when writing or

printing replaced oral « From this viewpoint, tradition. Therefore, instead the webuser can of beina overburdened with choose freely, ancient memories, sometimes in internet enables people to access to a contradiction with huge memory, made himself in the multi acamedic documents as well as personnality of the personal opinions. The ego formed by as new thing is that is emerging а many metamorphosis generation of people, as moods between whose first reflex is to look for information euphoria and on the internet. It is dysphoria, once however a very risky business because on more.» the internet.

> information and disinformation are fighting each other. Between great knows how and spoiled artefacts<sup>7</sup>, information doesn't depend so much on the quality but on its visibility and its accessibility through a coded path. Another new thing is that internet and wireless networks let you fix the shorttern memory and spread it, although it escapes from our brain capacities and social structures.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, http://web.archive.org/ put in people's reach a part of the memory of internet

Wikipedia contains lots of treasure, sometimes ugly artefacts like for example the article about the Tulle Hang men. This article was used for a long time to serve as an excuse for the massacre by the second SS armoured division of 99 young men, portrayed as bloody terrorists.

# THE CODED WAY

In the center of its own network, the webuser never stops re-creating a very personal story, passing from hypertext link to another through different modalities. They can be linked, on one hand, to the net superstructure, in particular the Google browser, the key for the majority of the webusers, and on the other hand to its network sollicitations. Thus the path which can be followed by an individual on internet while writing his own story is coded by his network, like his usual practices paving the way for direct sollicitations (email) or indirect ones (referencing on the browsers).

# **TRANSILIENCE**

Abernathy and Clark (1985) created the word "transilience", from transition and resilience<sup>8</sup>, to describe the

capacity to be flexible in a changing environment. The terminology is perfectly suitable for the multiform cyberspace which is able to resist to manipulation and control. The network works thanks to a competition

behaviour which, just by social innovation,

challenges what was taken for granted the day before. Through this resiliant creative process, internet avoids any control approach. The flexible universe of internet is moving in a time space which is different from that of the dominating organizations.

Indeed, these latter are either constrainted by both their hierarchy and results or fixed by the legislation making a full-scale network manipulation harder, to the great despair of the government.

## **IMMANENCE**

Although the cyberspace capacity to influence significantly social issues still to be proved, influences the web sphere in its practices, development, rules and beliefs. Then, one faces, by cycles, immanent phenomenons, such as the 2.0 web. From a darwinist standpoint, cyberspace is self sufficient. It doesn't have any decison center nor any decision-maker. This may frighten the dominating powers and make them powerless spectators of the internet evolution. Nevertheless, three major options seem to give the dominating

> power the opportunity to regain some sort of control over internet: the cosmetic appropriation by mimicking the new paradiams in pathetic way (creation of blogs, posting a video on the internet), the purchase of a start qu havina a its consequence

dissolution in the hierarchical magma as well as a desesperate act in the legal way, and at the same time the risk of being out of the web or worse, being ignored.

## **EMANATION**

According to Manuel Castells<sup>9</sup>, "the most determinating influence exerted by the media on politics, doesn't

http://www.strategie-aims.com/lille/com2202.pdf

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Thomas DURAND et Silvia GUERRA-VIEIRA, Etalonner l'Innovation Métrique d'une Innovation Annoncée, Ecole Centrale Paris.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Manuel Castells, *Emergence des « médias de masse individuels »*, opus cité.

come from what is published but from

what it's not". If, as we said, internet doens't seem to influence so much the biggest society debates, it true remains that the network can incite and highlight topics. Thus, micromedia come from the cyberspace and are shakina аu the structured communication and marketing plans although influence isn't predominant the agenda.

Some examples may be underlined:

videos of politicians in embarassing situations, the emphasis on artists, rejected by record companies,

turning and reshaping the logo away from its original message,

the emergence of movers and shakers on very specific subjects.

However, internet is also exerting influence on real life, even though it is more difficult to define it because it is acting on the interpretation of the world through mirror effect. This kind of is neither political influence It is rather based strategic. experience. Thus the textual world of internet shapes another undescriptible world which isn't based on a coherent system of situations, values and actors. This is the reason why the influence exerted by the new media is called "microfluence", a neologism defining a discreet or even quantum influence, resulting from "little things rather than bombastic speeches, from real life rather than projects, from emerging practices rather than planified ones"10. Microfluence works from and inside the

also exerting influence on real life, even though it is more difficult to define it because it is acting on the interpretation of the world through mirror effect. This kind of influence is neither political nor strategic. It is rather based on experience.»

net through micromedias which can be short texts, photos, drawings, videos, sound projects animations. All of them can be easily "copy and paste" from one web site to another, from an email to another, from а social network to another. or from a sms to another. It operates in active or passive interactions,

interconnections made possible in proportions never reached before.



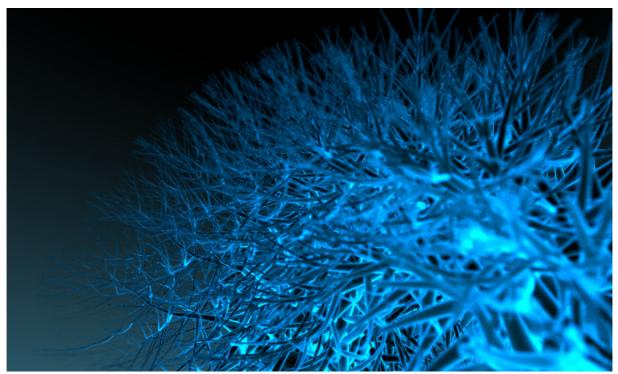
The twitter application simply ables you to tell your network what you are doing. More than the contents, it is the social link which is the strongest motive of this habit in the multiplication of the ego through interaction, a personal experiment moving beyond space and time.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Kaplan, *L'EntreNet*: ces petites (ou grandes) choses que l'on fait ensemble, 2006, http://www.internetactu.net/2006/02/27/lentrenet-

<u>ces-petites-ou-grandes-choses-que-lon-fait-ensemble/</u>

# INFLUENCE VERSUS COMPLEXITY

On the internet, influence depends on complex social relationships which cover a large scope from personal and logical exchange of diffusion and networks aimed at mobilizing people (for example, Greenpeace). Thus, internet is a social melting pot and nobody, except the tolitarian systems, can stop people to surf on and to be part of it. As a consequence, this muddles up the modalities of the internet, which cannot operate in a delimited field anymore rather than revealing itself to its target people as well as its opponents and the curious onlookers. From this viewpoint, a merciless war between the many memories above is played out before our eyes and it is ruled by direct sollicitations as well as micromedia through referencement. The purpose of numerous microfluences is to impose itself in a textual world in order to act on the virtual world and on the coherence of the world as we can see it, sometimes hoping to shake up the real world. But internet is swarming with a wide range of questions on a variety on topics, warnings, supports, requests and petitions: the competition doesn't occur exclusively in a field, but between topics and consequently on the agenda. Not only, will the influencial actor have to defend his point of view but also to put the topic within the webusers' agenda.



Do Internet and the social networks have fractal proprieties? The dupplication of behaviours shaped by technology (similar at first sight but different beneath the surface) can suggest it. The complexity comes as much from the diversity of interactions as the contents.

# INFLUENCE MODELS ON THE INTERNET

The former description of this complex, heterogeneous, chaotic, liquid and pixelized universe could let us think that all attempts at influencing would be bound to fail. However, the facts seem to tell us it's not the case. One has just to see to what extent unexpected actors surge within the terrifying or marvellous chaos of internet just like Google (born at a time when everything seemed taken for granted between the different search engine actors), Facebook or the frenzy around web 2.0 concept. But the use of internet in the influence exertion is still possible. This latter covers different stages associated with principles. However the reader is to be warned: here our goal isn't to give any tricks but to provide results based on our observations.

# CONTROLLING THE AGENDA

Being able to characterize agenda seems to be the ultimate stage of the influence. It is best illustrated by the first eight months of Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency with the application of a doctrine based on the capacity to set a subject per day, even if it means shocking, making it the front page news and the buzz on the blogs. But all the actors haven't got such a mediatic power as the Elysee, ie the french President's house. As he won't have the agenda under control, the person who wants to be in a position of influence will try to use it to put a subject first. Then, he is faced with several options with the possibility to combine them: grabbing the top of the news (elections, olympic games), addressina an issue (GMO, globalisation, ecology, human rights, world economic crisis...) or using the mediatic power of a social, political or actor. However, economic competition reaches its limits due to the fact that succes is barely met, except in spectacular situations.

# **CALLING IN**

As stated above, even though numerous means are at the web users' disposal, they behave as dictacted by habits (which are currently used on the net) in order to meet satisfaction of individual needs. Then, they can subscribe to newsletters compatible with their center of interest, be directly called by their personal network, use a Google-like search engine to enter internet. For the most specialized of them, they have the possibility to subscribe to RSS and other information providers.

Attracting the webusers' attention goes through using diverse means, something that requires a thorough know-how of the net and the codes that come with it. It is furthermore interesting to see how Google influences the webuser. A recent marketing study<sup>11</sup> showed what one could forecast: for a specified research, the more a web page is on the organic (natural) top of the Google results list, the more the web page is credited for its contents. But what is less obvious is that the study also reveals that the presence of the web page in the ad links, if it is associated to the natural filing on Google, enhances this credit. Thus, playing with the influence multiplicating the data visibility on the internet (which responds to specific needs or waitings) seems possible. As far as the person having some kind of influence, the aim is to pave the way

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Enquiro Research, *The Brand Lift of Search*, 2007, <a href="http://www.enquiroresearch.com/brand-lift-of-search.aspx">http://www.enquiroresearch.com/brand-lift-of-search.aspx</a>

for his expectations and to spread his centers of interest on line that webusers can borrow while doing their research. But, one needs to be warned, every superficiality is fastly specifically reiected. "spamerindexing", a procedure which consists in multiplicating same pages in order to saturate the research engines. Paving the way demands to multiply channels bv usina different mediums, something that needs to develop public relationships on the internet.

# ATTRACTING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION

In the immediacy that goes with the use of internet, the capacity to provide a simple, attractive, different and informative message is one of the most efficient way to convince the web user to be interested in a proposition, even though he doens't subscribe to it. This message is to able to meet the web user needs or arouse their curiosity. Thus, headlines or thumbnails are gaining ground in order to stop the web user in his frenetic zappina. At this stage, one is in the very midst of some kind of spontaneous influence "which consists in providing webusers with behaviours or opinions, by using some brains shortcut<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, the immediate target is to attract, focus the webuser's attention on a specific proposition.

## **SUMMERIZING**

Every proposition is to allow the person who is targeted to be quickly appropriated, which needs a capacity

Natacha Romma, Eric Boutin LES STRATEGIES D'INFLUENCE SUR INTERNET: VALIDATION EXPERIMENTALE SUR LE LOBBY ANTINUCLEAIRE, page 17, opus cité. to summarize an opinion and to extract its core meaning, even though summary goes this with consequent items (reporting, book, film...). But whatever the summary is, it will have to be usefull to the webuser. in order to deliver the promise made at earlier step (euphoric value), otherwise it might cause an immediate rejection of the opinion expressed above (dysphoric value). This summary will be more enclined to have an impact on the webuser when he is valued in his approach, with the possibility to retranscript this proposition personal network blogs...). Here is at play a mixture between spontaneous influence and influence through information "which generally aims at leading the actor which is under some kind of influence to include in his decision making process information that are left on his way by the influential actor. 13"

### **LEGITIMAZING**

With the exception of a few cases, the reader will take off his personal propositions experience, abide by the web law to be accepted. Even though we don't suggest any precepts, it appears to us that 80 to 90 % of a proposition must be accepted first to introduce at the most from 10 to 20 % of a new proposition, otherwise it won't be accepted because it is likely to be too disturbing. In addition, a proposition will be all the more accepted as it won't reproduce the codes, know-how, believes and

Natacha Romma, Eric Boutin LES STRATEGIES D'INFLUENCE SUR INTERNET: VALIDATION EXPERIMENTALE SUR LE LOBBY ANTINUCLEAIRE, page 17, opus cité.

values of the person it is intended to. In summary, internet doesn't escape the social learning rules and this is why it is difficult to have some influence out of a textual world, that is marked out by a set of implicit rules seen as legitimate. In

the cyberspace reality, new things seem to exist mainly on the surface. They are also customized with gadgets, coated with

« Internet doesn't escape the social learning rules »

cosmetic vocabulary and sustained by a marketing or advertisement strategies. Here, nothing is really new except the well known relationship modalities. What's more the influence reaches its limits due to the impossibility for internet to act beyond social learning.

# **INFERING**

Using a cognitive process based on inference demands to the influential person to start from an untreated and debatable information in order to interpret it. Then, this interpretation becomes itself a real assertion on which reasoning might rest on. On the process internet, this -close manipulationis forced to take shortcuts which fit the means contingencies. Thus, a proof, real or fake, whether it is a diagram, a photo, a short video sequence or just a link to a web site, will give some credence to the proposition. It is interesting to observe that some rumours on line rely on hypertext links that have never really existed for exemple a link to a famous newspaper web site: the web user is simply led to believe that the link has vanished but existed before. In many cases, these are storystelling

which can generate the inference process. It was the case when a Greenpeace action called "green my apple" <sup>14</sup> encouraged Apple inc. to produce environment friendly. The webusers, and most specifically the Apple stuff users, were to sign a petition. Using the Apple codes and

flattering the apple brandname aficionados, Greenpeace explained in a very briefly: "In avril 2005, Steve Jobs laid bare his thoughts about the associations' campaigns and environmental NGO:

"bullshit, he said". Well, Steve, that's exactly what a CEO dumping mercury and polychlorated biphelynes in the rivers would say. Not a cool guy who wants to be regarded as an enviro and a hero of the information technologies." <sup>15</sup> In just a few words, Greenpeace was just undermining methodically the legend of the Apple inc. founder and was harming the core of the brandname identity. Then, the Apple's customers had to draw conclusions from it and sign the petition.

# GIVING SOME CREDIT

The credibility of a proposition depends mainly on its source. Either the transmitter is known and talks to his close personal network, or he is institutionalized by his function or notoriety, or he benefits from the media credibility which conveys the message and sometimes these three conditions altogether. Thus the internet anonymity, which scares so much the authorities, cannot easily be applied to influence stategies. Instead, it is the fake identity which is to be feared, even though it turns out to be easily

<sup>14</sup> http://www.greenmyapple.org/

http://www.greenpeace.org/apple/itox.html

verifiable. To get some credit, a topic needs to be borne by the initiator or by web transmittors but also in the real sphere. Indeed, classical medias play an essential role when they give a significant part of credibility to an actor in position of influence or to an assertion, whether it is done on line or whether it is the simple extension of a

proposition made outside the cyberspace. The persuasive technologies<sup>16</sup> laboratory of the Stanford University (United States) and its "captology" department prescribe 10 rules which permit to give credit to a web site:

- facilitating control, details included
- 2. demonstrating that there is a real organisation behind the proposition
- 3. emphasising your expertise
- demonstrating that people in charge of a web site are trustworthy
- 5. facilitating contact
- 6. using a fitting design
- 7. polishing up the ergonomy
- 8. updatina
- 9. restricting the ads contents
- 10. avoiding all the mistakes, even the smallest ones.

# **FACILITATING**

All of us are annoying by emails too heavy to be loaded, by the use of exotic technologies which bring nothing new while requiring to load additional modules or endless animations, etc.

Each obstacle on the webuser road is intended to get him lost and the actors having some influence have rapidly understood that the art of the simplicity imposes itself in every communication. For example, we can easily understand the copy and paste process of micro media (demanding the use of uncommon technologies), is bound to be fruitless. But facilitating isn't only restricted to the purely ergonomic or technological fact. Thus,

the Total firm made the web site "Total in Birmania" in order to convince people of the rightfulness of its mission in this totalitarian country as well as provide a counterweight to the accusations of forced labor due to its presence. Far proposing to make a copy and paste and eventually to find other media to

legitimate what the petroleum company said, far from the cyberspace's canon, Total points out that "each link directed to this website must receive the the company's approval, which reduces to nothing the credit one can have about the will of transparency displayed on this website. Facilitating also demands to opt for the "Let it go".

### LET IT GO

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The "Let it go" consists in accepting to do a transfert of media power and to renounce the idea of the absolute control of both image and information. Letting the webusers take up an issue, encourage them to multiply actions, whether they are small or big, might create snowball effects some of which can become particularly powerfull. On the internet, people share spontaneously part of their life, their feelings and moods, in opposition to

<sup>16</sup> http://credibility.stanford.edu/

the autoritarism. ongoing Phenomenoms like blogging, Facebook or Twitter show how far specific existence forms are being developped, at the crossroad of personal imprint of and social individualism within suractivity а background. "Desinstitutionnalizing" an icon in favour of greater proximity, facilitating exchanges (social links), paving the way for more initiative match a dramatic evolution of the society and certain needs of the hypermodern individual. When he created MyBO, during the 2008 US

presidential campaign, allowing everyone to create his own space on the internet, Barack Obama accepted to let it go, to transfer a piece of its media power and to use the lever of social individualism when facilitatina exchanges between fans in a universe controlled by the media. In 2007, during the french presidential elections, the main candidates hadn't understood it as they recreated on the internet ready-to-use models looking like modern ones made with videos and sterile blogs.

Fig. 2: The possibility to create a personal space with MyBO during the 2008 US Presidency campaign.



# CONCLUSION

"There is only one world and it is fake, cruel, contradictory, seductive and senseless. A such made world is the real one". Friedrich Nietzsche.

Even though we can define rules which influence internet, the use of these very rules by many actors (with as many objectives as there are actors), make the influence possible but uncertain in the cyberspace. Internet still remains a media which offers such a liberty to its users that it allows them to be in contradiction with themselves, between lies and truth, information and disinformation in a "liquid society" 17 whose values are heterogeneous. Furthermore, it appears that on the internet, it is better to bring up microfluences, made of small things, instead of weighing heavily on the world's running, even though this media, either new it may be, seems to disturb many powers, included when these little things denounce political lies, change the deal of the press or enable to finance an electoral campaign as was the case for Barack Obama during the 2008 US elections<sup>18</sup>. However, places where influence can be made are existing somewhere, out of the beaten tracks or at the frontier of the subjects which are part of the news or when unpublished works are induced or when links between ideas are developped within networks' interaction, through intelligence and knowledge. The 2010 year, year of the crisis, will be the one of every opportunity, possibly ushering a new beginning. It might be possible in the near future to check if internet will sustain the emergence of something new, and thus, proving its capacity to influence or on the contrary consolidating the statut quo which can be found in the servile invocation of the "anticrisis" word, already out of date. By now, it is once more the "hedgehog strategy" 19, all spines out, which seems to prevail in front of the storm, with the apathy of the government of several western countries (including the french one) to forbid, to restraint, to prevent, to control or to tax internet, using the crisis as an excuse.<sup>20</sup>

To finish with, let's remind us that the internet DNA contains a piece to share/give (cooperating in order to produce immaterial benefit). As a matter of fact, the capacity to provide a set of rich and free ideas, without any other ostentatious

17 Zygmunt Bauman, *L'Amour liquide. De la fragilité des liens entre les hommes*, éd. Rouergue/Chambon, 2004.

among which 66 % voted for Obama, something that hadn't happened since 1972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> MyBo has enabled to raise 200 millions dollars, i.e. near half the fund raised during the campain, thanks to 1 million people who organised on their own 75 000 local events and 2 million phone calls. One understands better the role of the internet and of its strategy to mobilise voters based on the analysis of the donations' structure: 95 % of the money received by Obama are less than 50 dollars versus 13 % for John Mac Cain, who succeeded to collect 171 million only. During these elections, between 21 & 24 million people were aged between 18 and 29

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Didier Heiderich, *Internet et le management de l'imprévisible*, 2003, page 4, <a href="http://www.communication-sensible.com/download/gestionimprevisible.pdf">http://www.communication-sensible.com/download/gestionimprevisible.pdf</a>
<sup>20</sup> "I do support this amendment because the world is going through the most serious crisis it has ever come

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> "I do support this amendment because the world is going through the most serious crisis it has ever come accross since 1929 and that only one answer has imposed itself (demanded by every single politician): régulation. It is a shame that only after financial institutions went bankrupt, growth came to a standstill and countries were on the verge of ruin, that the world has decided to wake up and finally accept to build an international regulated system. Are we doomed to wait for irreparable damage to be done before the world makes up its to regulate internet?", Frédéric Lefebvre (a French conservative politician).

underlying objective, still remains the most certain mean to gain notoriety, credit and influence in the "internet galaxy".21

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "The internet galaxy" is a book written by Manuel Castells.