

# Eduprosumers: Educational Actors in the Digital Age

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**Abstract.** This article reflects on the implications of ICT, in formal, non-formal and informal educational processes, referred to the new identity construction of those who learn to be, do, think and feel, according to other communication codes, although they attend anachronistic educational institutions. It is highlighted as the negativity that interpersonal relationships, life practices and identities, have been rid of the reign through experiential routines imposed by the daily digital techno-mediation from/between individuals and groups. However, it highlights as positivity and the proposal of a definition to the Eduprosumers who are not just consumers and users of ICT; it means "cognitive", "methodologies", "educational content", etc., which enriches their own knowledge and shares it with their peers, generating virtual learning communities.

Keywords: Education · Prosumers · Technology · Teaching-learning

# 1 Introduction

Contemporary society has deepened the cultural isolation of Modernity [6]. The techno-economic informational way of production, which replaced the industrial one, is organized in knowledge and information networks, which are concentrated in nodes that flow worldwide. It is the Do-nature of the dominant globalization, in front of which the *Being* of the isolated and local culture languishes. These 21st century social relations are torn between the global network and the closed, primary identity, that is, between globalization and community identities [6–41].

The infrastructure of society is supported in a techno-economic network, where internet and ICT fulfill a function both articulatory and de-articulatory, since the degree, time and speed of connection to networks de-re-configures the new social hierarchy much more than the traditional school institution [44–46]. On this basis, the temporality of social relations becomes more important than its spatiality [20]. The identity has become portable, changing, fragmented and dissolved, according to the network in turn. Freedom has become simple consumer freedom of a liquid modernity [4–63]. It is what [6] called: social schizophrenia referring to that Do-Being in divorce, imposing a sterilized culture that offers no sense of life or belonging to the world [19]. But that, in opposition, requires and enables a digital citizenship, cyber citizenship or

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A. Basantes-Andrade et al. (Eds.): TSIE 2019, AISC 1110, pp. 363–373, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37221-7\_30 e-citizenship [2, 5, 9, 23], understood as the post-modern status resulting from the supposed freedom of self-registration of the user in networks and cyberspace sites that grant him a code, attributes and coordinates, systematically used by digital platforms as data and communication channels, which leads to new contracts duties and rights related to this type of recent citizenship.

## 1.1 The Society of the 21st Century: A Civilizing Dilemma

The scientific and technological advance has created the possibility of a transhuman world [22], where the biological limits of human life can be surpassed and in which artificial intelligence, internet of the things, *artilecs* and *cyborgs* would mark an important encounter of human becoming. It is a projection of the rupture of culture: that is, instrumental reason becomes cybernetic thought and action, robotic, orienting towards a world where quantities without shared feelings predominate, assuming more and more control over the course of decisions, actions and global deliberations. Prospectively, this would result in a world with massive and abysmal inequalities and exclusions. In fact, the number of human brain operations per second will be predictably surpassed by machines in approximately a decade.

On the other hand, the cybernetic calculations and the algorithms for automatic financial investments in real time decide more financial operations in the moment [28]. There are those who assume this transhuman derivation of *artilecs* as an inevitable part of the evolution of the *homo sapiens* [44–46]. Other authors [21–28], perceive that becoming as a threat. But amid this dilemma, these four authors agree on the importance of revaluation and re-centering in the human. It is a civilizational dilemma that demands learning and understanding of its implications for the sustainability of human life.

The mentioned social transformations have been cataloged as an epoch change, whose cultural response is led by feminism, environmentalism and alternative movements to development. In this regard, De Souza Silva [15] states that, "under a relational-related and communicative rationality, sustainability can only emerge from human interaction, because our interdependence transforms us into angels with just one wing, who cannot fly if they do not embrace."

In fact, after the Cold War ended, in the last decade of the 20th century, social criticism emphasized the ethical debate on Human Rights and advocated the search for a good and dignified life for all, which was led by the themes of the quality of life and sustainability on our planet. Thus, the redefinition of development has become rather, an alternative to development. The expansion of human capacities -also understood as qualities or competencies- has become the center of attention. Competencies and abilities defined by the same people from their own ethno-cultural contexts, from a combination of the most basic universal human rights, but with the assessments of each person, people and culture. It is no longer the product of the cumulative economy what would be established as a priority, but the scope and enjoyment of the capabilities of everyone, equitable and expansive, which would indicate that progress [45].

A dignified life is sought in its qualities. Particularly in Ecuador, *Buen Vivir* or Good Living is an ethical-political principle expressed in the Constitution of the Government of the Republic of Ecuador [27] and in the National Plan for Good Living

presented by the National Secretariat of Planning and Development of Ecuador [49], based on the respect for ancestral knowledge, cultures and nature (*Pachamama*), where the common good is expressed as a goal not limited to the national and human, but inextricably linked with the whole world. This entails a reevaluation of ancestral cultures, the reconnection with nature as well as a complementary vision of the dualities and the communal revitalization of the social.

The importance of articulating a valuable world for people and the ability to achieve it requires a re-conceptualization of learning as a key to the process. The development of skills, abilities, vital qualities and Good Living (*Buen Vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay*) have been proposed in that direction. That is why we ask ourselves how the predominant techno-mediated social relationship can become an opportunity to communicate other feelings and values, that allow the expansion of such capacities and the reconfiguration of emerging social identities.

#### 1.2 On Identities, Cultural Devices and Their Reconfiguration

Today's understanding of social identities is due to the linguistic turnaround that has occurred in social sciences since the mid-twentieth century. This meant a dematerialization of heavy structuralist representations -social, psychic, personality, the Ego, etc.in favor of a fluid, complex and dialogical dynamic and constructivist conception of psycho-social phenomena from a discursive, argumentative and rhetoric perspective. In this sense, several authors [12, 13, 36, 37, 55], have defined the concept of social identities -group, collective and individual- interpreting, analyzing and explaining the psychosocial process of its construction from the discourses and narratives of the people, the *mass media* and institutions.

The identity as a process of construction of narratives throughout the life of individuals from the moment of granting a name to the newborn [10]. Thus, identity would imply interpersonal relationships -kinship, filiation, family, ethnicity, nation-state, group or social class, etc.- and the social structure would provide the existing identity patterns in a given context. On this behalf [25] conceives identity as an intersubjective dimension of social actors and not as an attribute, property of the subject itself. The identity would not be something essential, immutable and singular; on the contrary, rather an active, complex, increasingly plural process resulting from conflicts and negotiations between the individual and its environment: hence its plasticity, variation, rearrangement and internal modulation. The identity is a space in which the individual forges through its story [42], a feeling of continuity through time and, consequently, a feeling of internal coherence that allows it to be apprehended as a singular individual [17] although always with the help of social and cultural elements.

From our perspective, we propose an approach to social identities from the binomial Nostrity/Otherness -*Nostredad/Otredad*- as a process-product of collective semantic fabric confection that allows us to delimit, as an inverted specular image, what would be the identifying garments of both the discursive I, and the endogroup we-, as of the Other -you/them- [14]. It is proposed to define the discursive I as the place-object of the discourse that is instituted in individuals once they access the symbolic dimension, thanks to the structure of each language, from the discursive framework of the stories elaborated by others. Thus the discursive I, before being the place of active sense -topos semantikos of the subject- which the interlocutor identifies and assumes as its personal center of selfreference -each one's self-, this would be a discursive object that is constructed socially in the family environment from stories that speak of social identities -roles, charactersmodel- existing in a specific place and time. The identity confection would be possible thanks to diverse cultural and technological devices that societies articulate intentionally to produce the subjectivities that historically they require.

The idea of a device suggests the intentional organization of a series of elements arranged in a way that allows the procurement of a certain result. The devices can involve the organization of different types of elements: mechanical, chemical, electronic, etc. At a more basic level they can also involve the disposition of human agentsactors, situations, rules, etc., which also allow certain socially important results to be obtained. In complex modern societies, cultural and technological devices coexist to help social actors with specific roles and status of knowledge-power, obtain specific results.

## 1.3 Meta-Psychology of Digital Techno-Devices

With the recent emergence and intrusive systematization of ICTs in people's daily lives, many of the psycho-socio-anthropological devices that had allowed for the construction of social identities in human groups for centuries, have been giving way to a techno-mediation process, increasingly present and imposing in the globalized everydayness, for a long time. This seems to correspond to a sort of civilizer technoconstruction project of a new notion of humanity in all its dimensions: psychological, socio-political, emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, ethical, bio-genetic, which for the past few decades have familiarized us with the idea of the Cyborgs.

This neo-humanity project would be a key aspect linked to the way digital children are related to primary and community identity stories: not only from family narratives, but above all from digital narratives. That is, all these new speeches that are collectively and individually made through ICT, through new communication modalities: SMS, chats, video-calls, etc., supported by digital platforms where social networks are interwoven, making and impregnating a noosphere whose existence unfolds in cyberspace and not in the local, incarnated, intersubjective relational space. This forced emergency that operates from the globalization of the technological use-consumption markets to establish the communicative connection with the Other, would be profoundly altering the processes of identity construction at a collective/inter-subjective and individual/subjective level.

This would correspond to the acquisition of new representations of the discursive I, which would no longer be structured only by the imaginary fusion between the first person of the singular and the image that the mirror sends back to the subject that sees itself, but also in function of the permanent dialogue that the child begins to have with other voices and images, whose volume, sound and quality are regulated by intelligent accessories, which allow articulation with an unplaceable virtual space. In addition, the invention of real time and the 3D image as superlatives of time-space and the image we perceive through our senses, lead to a hyperreality. It is safe to say beyond reality, which would surpass the vulgar and wild reality of the family and the community that

until recently had been perceived, however that simultaneously, imposes a depletion of the materiality of the world due to its virtualization magnified by the ICT market of the network society.

The technological devices changing process, now available for the preparation of the new techno-mediated social identities is part of the globalizing delocalization experience in which the 'here and now' is ineffable in the conventional time-space coordinates -house, neighborhood, neighborhood, city, country, nation, religion, etc.where the individual was located, rooted and identified. This is another of the identity fragmentations of the techno-culture, different from the primary identification of the great masses.

#### 1.4 Communication, Knowledge and Technology

The construction of relationships, practices and social identities has been reconfigured from the discourses, narratives and daily experiences of the subjects. Likewise, these constructions have been influenced by the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as mediations of the social uses of subjects [8], imposing different relationship patterns. These transformations must be approached with a holistic method that allows understanding how from this new communication ecosystem new ways of linguistic, emotional and relational exchange have been constituted in the teaching-learning processes, which constitute the analysis foci to generate agreements that consolidate the Society of Knowledge [3, 6, 12, 13, 16, 18, 56].

In this communication paradigm coexist a Nostrity and an Otherness that, thanks to the immediacy, fluidity, and the connectivity/proximity imaginaries, are confused in the individual discursive I that from the ineffability-ubiquity and uncertainty, it employs digital resources and social networks to reduce their own existential questions. These new scenarios of techno-mediated experience have provided the opportunity for early proposals such as that of [62] in dialogue with the reflections shared by [43] on the ecology of media to analyze the way how ICT globally impact intersubjective social dynamics.

While Levinson [39] suggests that in the media and current technology, the user "creates content online with almost all uses" we can also analyze the effects of the imaginary digital of hyper connected postmodernity. This is what Martín-Barbero [40] interprets as "lifestyles shaped from consumption; in the secularization and internationalization of symbolic worlds and in the fragmentation of communities and their conversion into public segmented by the market," displacing social processes and making effervescent consumption invisible, another type of possible management of technology which does not tend to competition but to collaboration.

Thus, the ecology of media Islas [35], "has taken care of analyzing how the development of mass media modifies societies' cultures. This means it analyses the implications that the use, consumption, modification and transformation of the practices and identities in different aspects carry with them. Referring to this, Postman [50] warns that: "technology becomes a medium when it employs a particular symbolic code, when it finds it place in a specific social scope" taking place in a determined context that culturally has its own developments and exchanges. Therefore, even though technology should not be an end itself, it is more than a simple mediator

between its development, its praxis and its socio-cultural environment in which it unfolds.

Following this idea, digital culture and in particular new communication and interaction networks impact deeply cognitive, behavioral and emotional processes, especially in the digital native youth who through the use of ICT and the divulge of information in social networks, share their daily experiences, topics of interest and above all, quickly become producers of different types of content which alter the conventional ways of learning and its social participation -collaborative learning, virtual learning communities, etc.- where knowledge is not given from a hierarchical relationship imposed by/from academic institutions, but instead through personalized informal processes made from a collective construction of knowledge [38–59], these serve as a base for understanding the interactive complexity of events in the Digital Era.

Along these lines, Jenkins [33] points out that this interactions framework entails levels of expertise and an *ethos* in users, since this includes articulation, artifacts and platforms that go beyond a simple adaptation or convergence of technological devices, since it "represents a cultural change, every time it encourages consumers to look for new information and stablish links between dispersed media content." For this reason, Castells [7], by analyzing the network Society, states that, "[this] process' cornerstone is software's open communication with all the advancements obtained from the net." Consequently, the thought of a school where interactive dynamic scenarios are developed cannot be postponed: not solely guided by theorical generational debates, but by dialogues and actions combined over the new structural and functional compositions of extracurricular everydayness.

## 2 Eduprosumers: Learning in the Digital Era

Over this last decade many authors have established studies and proposals that approach the ICT linked to education [11, 24, 26, 30-32, 34, 51, 53, 54, 58, 64, 66] in them technologies that have integrated people and educative actors are evidenced, modifying different aspects of their practices, uses and relationships. Pérez-Gómez [47] asserts that these practices require educational actors, skills and qualities that accompany a "construction process of the human significances [...], forming in a conscious and reasoned way their particular types of interpreting reality and acting on it." Thus, the key role that education must fulfill in every discursive space that corresponds to the complex emerging necessities of the double local/global contemporary context [52]. This allows the understanding that many of the actors in the educational process have turned into digital migrants in their own teaching practices, with sights for a Piscitelli [48] "full exploitation of the learning networks and all the material and conceptual instruments associated to a mediatic and digital alphabetization." This agrees with Pérez-Gómez's [47] proposal about indispensable mediatic skills for the responsible and proactive digital citizenship exercise which implies the necessary cognitive, emotional, critical and valuable articulation of the new educational actors in the digital era.

It is about a path towards mediatic and transmedia alphabetization as inputs for the interactive participation culture of the educational actors, Grandío [29] developing its skills and: "abilities to evaluate and create contents through multiple platforms, using diverse languages and showing an ethical and responsible attitude towards its own mediatic diet and its productions".

In this societal context the globalized interconnectivity and time-spatial immediacy set apart from the ICT, new native and migrant digital educational actors have been built, they take place in this game as Eduprosumers from different fields an aspects, from their production and scientific divulgement of educational content developed for/with their pairs. Centering our attention in them allows the redefinition of the academic field in function of a better understanding of their skills, experiences and cognitive, motivational, ethical, aesthetic among other interests, with the purpose of adapting education, curriculums and didactics to the new relational dynamics and contexts that are filled with physical tightness of classrooms and respond more efficiently to their own learning necessities for an unknown and unpredictable future, but which without doubt, requires more active, critic, creative, intercultural, generous with the biodiversity and open citizens in order to build a society that urges to be created.

## **3** Final Considerations: Eduprosumers as Agents of Science Divulgation

What to do in response to the arguments opposing the systematic use of the ICT [8] in the daily process of interaction with the world, where would the identity construction of the individuals, especially from the educational area, be on stage during this change of epoch? Without losing sight of the critical aspects previously mentioned, a theory-methodical alternative appreciated would be to critically strengthen these technomediating experience formal and informal education with the ends of sharing and divulging science.

In this sense an Eduprosumer is defined as:

Every actor of the educational process that not only consumes/uses ICT; but instead, through these, he generates, consciously or not, products, cognitive strategies, methodologies, content, etc., which are openly shared with others by using digital resources or social networks, without profiting from it. Developed from their diggings, tastes, values, emotions, interests, knowledge and experiences, providing to and learning from global communities which are personalized, ubiquitous, active, significative and de-re-configurating formal knowledge structures towards the exploitation of informal spaces.

Therefore the Eduprosumer, by identifying itself as an active knowledge and learning strategies producer-consumer, would change its thoughts towards technomediation: smart gadgets turn into resources to generate and circulate knowledge and produce situations and opportunities for teaching-learning which allow a relative independent criterion and cognitive for ICT user, with hopes of producing in itself and in others, lucidity, interpretation, critical and comparative analysis or argumentative speculation effects. So, the Eduprosumer turns the passive role of technological consumer into a roughly conscious activity for intellectual performance, generating conditions or learning products interacting proactively in its own learning process interconnected with others. These skills could be defined in terms of Sola [61],

Critical thinking, analyzing and providing original answers, creation, expression, collaboration [...] which constitute the best baggage for entering the job market as active, critical and autonomous people, capable of adapting to the changing and uncertain circumstances which the future of the job places hold.

To synthesize, assuming the Eduprosumer role means to turn into an active agent conscient of making strategies/products of knowledge and cultural alternative discourses in the net, employing critically and technically technological opinions and/or artificial intelligence, which take part in the contemporary communicational process. However, using ICT as an indispensable resource for making and changing knowledge in actual educational processes is playing with the technologies in the mediation with the Other and with itself, this always means a techno-dependency risk. Nonetheless, being aware of that supposes a possibility of critical distancing which, in any other way, is absent and is rarely considered necessary.

Without doubt, for Vilanova [65] Latin-American academic institutions these perspectives carry an idea of 'rethinking from the pedagogic' assuming as an epistemic compass for education the principles of Good Living [1]: an *ethos* based on the ancestral pre-Columbian civilizations' wisdom and cosmovision which gather a world vision focused on the human being respectfully integrated to its natural environment (*Pachamama*). In this high complexity context, it is fundamental to articulate sociopolitical, techno-economic and epistemic-cultural aspects which correspond to a profound societal change, vital for planetary sustainability.

This is a bet that assumes a crucial and transcendental cultural turn which reconnects with an ability of living, enjoying, thinking, feeling, from a perspective not solely centered on the discursive I, but impregnated from the commonwealth of nontangible and material goods shared in an interculturality in gestation, which is diverse, open to the Otherness and to the simultaneity of one's and the other's interest, towards a more sustainable and equitable world, all of which describes to us a Utopic world in the middle of an Western world devastated by desperation and senselessness, impregnated with bogus.

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