



Information, knowledge and learning: access and uses

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The papers selected to be part of this thematic issue are inscribed in the field of information sciences in an interdisciplinary, interinstitutional and international dialog with social sciences, communication science and health science. Most of them were presented as a conference, lecture or communication during the “1st Colloquium on Mediation and Use of Knowledge and Information: a France-Brazil dialog”, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, in November 2008, by means of the French-Brazilian network of researchers on Mediations and Social Uses of Knowledge and Information - the MUSSI Network (Mediações e Usos Sociais de Saberes e Informação), supported by Iciet/Fiocruz, Ibict/MCT, UFRJ, Capes and Faperj, with the participation of researchers from several universities and research centers from Brazil and France.

The MUSSI Network was an enterprise formed by researchers from both countries who were interested in updating key concepts and principles for the study of the modes of formulation of information, so as to produce knowledge and learning having social appropriation in view. In France, this field is called information-documentation and, according to Metzger (2006), two key expressions could categorize it: *access to knowledge and culture* and *selected and registered knowledge*, to which *appropriation, mediation and sharing of knowledge* could be added.

These same terms ease the way to glimpsing at different levels of inquiry on informational culture, nowadays called digital, as a transversal problem that crosses several fields of knowledge and social and professional practices. Therefore, the MUSSI Network researchers question and invite other fields of knowledge to integrate the shared enterprise and reflect critically on information, communication and knowledge in the globalized and technically interconnected world of nowadays.

Public health is a specifically sensitive subject to this reflection, when it is understood, according to Minayo (1995), that health and disease, besides being biological facts, are part of a reality built by history and by the individual's collective and personal expression. Still according to the author, the greatest challenge of public health is creating and reaching a wider concept in public policies which may integrate social policies, life conditions, as well as the sensitivity for cultural wealth and diversity. Thus, like information and communication sciences, health is also dependant on culture and phenomena such as meanings and symbolic creation.

The theme *Information, knowledge and learning: access and uses* translates a certain gaze upon these concepts, so as to include and relate the most canonic trends in studies and project them to help understanding the information world nowadays. This intention does not mean understanding these notions through yesterday's reading apparatus. Quite the opposite, it means reconfiguring them in a way that does not render the phenomena natural, inscribing them in a thought that considers cultural, social, historical and critical perspectives.

We believe this is the challenge for information sciences, yesterday and today, which we sought to translate in the concepts of accesses and uses of information, knowledge and awareness, understanding that access, itself, doesn't carry the plural possibilities of productions, uses and appropriations of writings and readings, files and memories or new sociabilities, identities and interactions.

If the framework for understanding these phenomena leads us to thinking contemporarily about a digital culture, it also recaptures the founders of the idea of a universal knowledge by means of the organization of a world network of knowledge and information. Regard-

ing this, Mattelart (2005) recovers a key moment of the path taken by social utopias based on the power of the means of production and transmission of knowledge to create a more humane world, built thanks to the shared knowledge and the universal access to learning. This moment had been defined by the first steps of a scientific formalization of the concepts “document” and “documentation”, that is, well before the definition of the cyber-mathematical notion of “information”. On this moment, two births concur: a subject known today as “information science” and the “globalization” notion.

The author reminds us of two important characters in this scenario, whose ideas were present in researches, practices and policies regarding information-documentation in Brazil and in France: the pacifist Belgian advocates Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet, who began and symbolized the project of constitution of the “Universal Book of Knowledge”, a vast documental encyclopedia comprehending the universe, a project developed at the International Bibliography Institute in Brussels. The International Conference on Bibliography and Documentation, organized by the Institute in 1908 was ruled by the idea that the results of universal cooperation must be available to all, by means of a wide network of services and documentation, established in big centers by autonomous groups (associations or administrations, official or private institutions) adhering to a collective project and carrying it out through unified methods.

We agree with Mattelart when he points out that, if the advancement possibilities of communication and information technologies are considered, we have never been so close to the possibility of making Otlet and La Fontaine’s dream come true, also the dream of the pioneers of solidary mundialism. On the other hand, there is still a great distance between the virtual capacities of the technical tool and the geopolitical-economical possibilities of its mobilization to confront the great social inequalities prevailing in the world.

In bringing together researchers and research groups and labs from France and Brazil, organizing its first international colloquium and gathering a selection of papers in this *Reciis* thematic volume, the MUSSI Network was guided by the epistemological, scientific, methodological, practical and political needs to consider the double dimension of information and communication in the so-called “societies of knowledge”: as a modern device that allows technical and symbolical skills to deal with the speed and meanings in the world; and as an element of identity and belonging to a certain society that values and is ruled by scientific and technical knowledge.

The articles were grouped according to topics so as to relate their issues and objects.

Information and communication: mediations, uses and access

The three contributions that compose this thematic axis deal with concepts that build the foundations for an interdisciplinary approach of the topic and the issues dealt with in this edition and that are recurring, as

applications, in the researches reported in the following articles.

Yves Jeanneret presents the article “The Relation between Mediation and Use in the Information-Communication Research Field in France”, in which he suggests an essential consideration of the topic, creating a parallel between the concept of *mediation*, which has an anthropo-sociological origin, and *use*, derived from the North-American business sociology, with a functionalist emphasis. The author also presents some examples to demonstrate that both concepts, notwithstanding their different origin traces, can complement the study of information-communication, so as to understand how ideas, knowledge and representations are formed. To complement the notion of use, and have it dialog with mediation in a communicational perspective, it is important to consider the concept of *practice*, which does not take place without its share of paradoxes and tensions. Two singular modes to interrogate communication were extracted by two fields of study, which can clarify mediations, uses and practices of information-communication: the history of book and scientific vulgarization. Finally, digital writing and the traces of editorial mediation in textual assemblages on the web are considered promising fields for the renewed and complementary employment of the concepts of mediation, use and practice.

Viviane Couzinet, in the article “Complexity and document: the hybridization of mediations in rupturing areas”, thinks about scientific communication, expression traditionally employed to denominate the communication among researchers and their colleagues in order to propose an analysis of an extended or hybrid communication with other social actors, in the context of new imbrications between the academic field and the practice-professional field. The author highlights the role of the documentalist’s mediation as a member of the research labs, as well as the change in the understanding of the notion of document itself. Presenting researches carried out on this topic by the MICS team (Mediations on Specialized Information and Communication) at the LERASS, Université Paul Sabatier, Toulouse 3. The researcher’s gazes pointing at rupture zones between the research world and the professional world has led to considering, in these researches, the sharing of scientific knowledge as a multiform research object.

Annette Béguin-Verbrugge’s article “Information, Communication and Anthropology of Knowledge” situates the main conceptual-methodological marks produced in the researches developed by the Information and Document Sciences team at the GERIICO Lab – Study and Interdisciplinary Research Group on Information and Communication, Université de Lille 3, based on “text sciences” and social sciences. Notions such as “text” or “enunciation” are employed according to a pragmatic perspective that considers semiotic, social and technical contexts to study the constitution, circulation and appropriation of knowledge in a systemic as well as a phenomenological perspective. The researches have

taken into consideration the materialities of information and its formatting in technical systems by means of a graphic interface, in an anthropologic perspective to glimpse at cultural, informational, economical dynamics as well as the social game itself in which the old and the new documental formats are inscribed.

Information and communication in health

Following, a series of five articles introduces conceptual and methodological marks of researches conducted in the field of information and communication in health, constituting a significant sample of the modes of construction of research objects in this area.

The first, by Regina Marteleto, “Youths, health and violence: knowledge appropriation and information production”, introduces general principles in the studies of the Anthropology of Information Group to show research results whose object is the relation between youths and violence in an information and health perspective, developed with groups inserted in projects to build community medias by nongovernmental organizations or in social intervention actions. “Zine Violento” series of fanzines created with the participation of youths demonstrates that the appropriation and knowledge sharing procedures, even if not resulting in immediate actions of social transformation, seem to involve them in identity affirmation actions and awareness of the rights that are part of a *symbolic reserve* which can, in different moments, guide the meanings and actions of social intervention.

José Wanderley Novato is the author of “Information in public health under an anthropologic view: A study in Minas Gerais, Brazil”, in which he employed the information anthropology perspective from his doctoral dissertation in the Information Science Postgrad Program at UFMG to study the use of information on health by officials and employees at municipal health departments. The research attempted to understand how the practices and concepts in public health convey multiple meanings which are socially and culturally conditioned, aiming at deepening the concept of “information anthropology”. The results demonstrated different aspects as to the how the departments use health information, according to aspects of the local and national cultures, which hesitate between modernity and backwardness.

Inesita Araújo, in “Contexts, mediations and production of meanings: a conceptual and methodological approach in communication and health”, discusses the ideas of context, mediation and production of meanings highlighting the conceptual, methodological and practical reach of the researches carried out by a team linked to the Laces-Communication and Health Research Lab at Ict/Fiocruz, in a social analysis of discourse perspective. The author introduces results from a few researches in which the concepts of place of speech, hybridism, discursive center and periphery, discursive competition, discursive community and place of interlocution reveal traces of complex processes and mediations in health communication.

Following and complementing is Katia Lerner and Janine Ribeiro’s “Youths and Aids discourses: from the centrality of contexts to the appropriation of meanings”, members of the same research team from Laces/Ict/Fiocruz, discuss results of a research that analyzed how youths from two peripheral neighborhoods in the city of Rio de Janeiro/RJ deal with the risky conditions and information on Aids prevention, pointing out the symbolic mediations in these processes. They conclude that under an apparent homogeneity of speeches there are tensions and conflicts, inherent to social relations and that are also expressed by the Aids prevention context, such as oppositions between classes, generations and genders.

Elmira Simeão and Cristiano Melo sign the article “Information Literacy to Capacitate Health Community Agents in Brazil: A mediation proposal based on the Extensive and Collaborative Model”, which presents a methodology based on two perspectives: an extensive communication model; ALFIN, an acronym used by Unesco to classify the information literacy process. The objective of the research is studying the mediation of community agents in the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) by means of capacitating workshops on information literacy. The study considers information sources used by the ACS and the enlargement perspectives after the ALFIN workshops. The contents produced in the workshops contribute to increase the scope of the extensive communication model proposal.

Information and communication: new formats, writings, languages, and uses

Four authors brought articles that deal with the different forms of writing and language in the production and communication of knowledge in modern and contemporaneous Medias: cinema, internet and electronic formats.

Gérard Régimbeau signs “Knowledge in art history on the Internet: profane, specialized and documental writings”, to approach the present realities of knowledge mediation of art history on the internet. The study analyzes, through case studies, the forms of profane, specialized and documental writings, considering their particularities and enunciating contexts in a socio-semiotic perspective in order to study how the interdependence between support and medium is built. The new modes of writing or reading authorized by the internet call our attention to three essential kinds of “new”: the signs at play, engendered by technique and esthetics; the one arising from the new conditions of text and image (innovation) enunciation; and the one referring to updating or original generation of contents (novelty). The texts receive different shapes as to linguistic and editorial unity, according to the context of its production, as well as its accessibility.

Béatrice Begault, in the text “The scientific journal, the role of information mediation among researchers: What is its future in a digital environment?”, introduces results from her doctoral dissertation developed with the MICS research team at Université de Toulouse 3, in

which she studies the new and old roles of the scientific journal as the main means of communication in the scientific field, to observe if the formats and uses of the electronic publication affect conditions and challenges faced by the disclosure of research results. To answer this question, a study with a group of researchers was carried out at a chemistry and technology engineering school (ENSIACET). Based on the results, the author proposes the general hypothesis that the priority of the discovery, of the position in a certain community in terms of reputation and the progress in the career, does not change with the kind of media used to publicize science, which obviously needs to be refined and related to the activity of writing to understand the distortions between the uses of information and the production of knowledge.

In the article “Genders, forms and status: a ‘pharmacy’ for the transmission”, Véronique Temperville presents part of her doctoral dissertation being developed with the GERIICO Team at Université de Lille 3, on the role of documental writings in the communication of knowledge, a compared study in four areas: Psychology, Languages/Spanish, History and Computer Science. The employment of the gender, shape and status concepts, by means of a new reading of Derrida, shows that the ineffable nature of *phármakon* throws light on how permanence, hybridization and metamorphosis are present in digital documents. The notion of context helps observing that the problems of legibility and legitimation are constant characteristics in the reception of documents. The partial results show that the *phármakon* notion seems to be especially useful to understand the present change and to reflect on the appropriation of new forms of writing by the readers.

The article written by Carmen Irene de Oliveira, “Non-scientific information on science in information and memory dynamics”, presents results from the doctoral dissertation developed with the Post graduation Program in Information Science at Ibict/MCT and Federal Fluminense University/UFF. Science-fiction movies were studied to challenge the representation of science, based on the assumption that the dynamic of a genre memory is related to a “non-scientific information about science”. The research studied remakes as moments of a great narrative on the referent “science”, believing that the remakes, presenting different versions of the same fictional narrative, reorganize the facts presented since the first version, seeking a balance between novelty and what is already known. The strong relation between the fictional works and the production contexts determines that the non-scientific information on science has its proprieties analyzed considering its condition as a mass cultural product.

Information and communication: criticism and interdisciplinarity

In this axis there are three articles which respectively deal with the critical contribution to researches on communication and information from Armand Mattelart, the theoretical formulation of the idea of interdisciplinarity

and structuralism and the theoretical, programmatic and practical formulation of the idea of transdisciplinarity in the academic world.

Carlos Alberto Ávila is the author of the revision article “Critical theory of information in Brazil: the contribution of Armand Mattelart”, in which he emphasizes the strong presence of the French sociologist in the academic scenario of Latin America in general and specifically of Brazil, from his studies of ideological analysis of information, by means of comic strips; the formulation of the cultural imperialism theory, the critical formulation of the notion of an “information society” always from an author with a critical and Marxist inspiration. The still incipient employment of A. Mattelart’s ideas in information studies in Brazil is pointed out, for its importance in establishing a renewing dialog with a research tradition which is sharply acritical and technicist and still established in information studies.

The article-essay from Maria de Fátima Tálamo “Production of knowledge, interdisciplinarity and structuralism” is a reflection in the organization of modern science, debating the production of knowledge in formal and informal contexts in its paradigmatic transition to post-modernity. In this transition, the resource to interdisciplinarity would allow dialog and the consolidation of humanities, which the author exemplifies with structuralism, which is now still playing an important role in the organization of new fields of investigation, such as sciences of the undetermined and information science. It is important to highlight, however, that interdisciplinarity is supposedly a mechanism developed from the tension among formal and informal areas of knowledge production, since it necessarily depends on the communicational processes to perform migrations and conceptual disseminations.

The article “Transdisciplinarity in the university: discourse and practice”, by Aleixina Maria Lopes Andalécio, based on her doctoral dissertation developed at the Post graduation Program on Information Science at UFMG, studies the issues brought about by the new forms of production and organization of knowledge, guided by the discourse and practices of transdisciplinarity. The latter is understood in the university context, as an effort to overcome the fragmentation and knowledge in disciplines and excessive specialization, before the complex reality of the present world, of a relational and interconnected character. The pretext is that there is an epistemological, practical, social and political distance between the transdisciplinarity discourse and practice. The results, still partial, show that there seems to be a consensus among researchers that the problems nowadays require an innovative approach and transdisciplinarity is presented as an adequate alternative.

Finally, there are three book reviews dealing with topics that probe and extend issues contemplated in articles in this volume.

This thematic issue aims at, as said before, promoting a dialog among subjects, each one centering its own

issues: information, communication and health sciences. The common link resides in questions about the sharing and use of knowledge and several material objects that allow the exchange and appropriation of knowledge, as much as interactions and modes of communications that constitute it.

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