

Privately Owned Public Spaces: the Internet and the Shaping of a New Breed of Consumers. From Participants to Users

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Abstract

Computers in the 1980s were seen as a way to liberate people from the constraints of physicality, to expand the horizons of knowledge, and to enhance access to information. But after a few somersaults, we are back to a market that closes rather than opens our horizons, one that monopolizes, and even de facto owns, our very information. With the adoption of the term “user” - as opposed to “participant” for example – an asymmetry of power is underlined. This linguistic choice enables Internet platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, iCloud, GoogleDrive) to maintain shady property rights on what users might perceive as public spaces (precisely because they are built to project a public space dynamic) but are in fact spaces in which the control over users' own data (e.g. pictures, texts) is often impossible, transforming such data into a commodity and reducing users to (used) consumers.

Key words

Language; Neo-Liberalism; Privatization; Public Spaces; Internet and Cloud computing

Resumen

En la década de 1980, los ordenadores se contemplaban como una forma de liberar a la gente de las limitaciones del mundo físico, ampliar los horizontes del conocimiento, y mejorar el acceso a la información. Pero después de diversos giros, volvemos a estar en un mercado que cierra nuestros horizontes en lugar de ampliarlos, que monopoliza, e incluso posee de facto, nuestra propia información. Con la adopción del término “usuario” - en lugar de “participante”, por ejemplo - se pone de manifiesto la asimetría de poder existente. Esta opción lingüística permite a las plataformas de Internet (como Twitter, Facebook, iCloud, GoogleDrive)

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mantener derechos de propiedad poco claros sobre plataformas que los usuarios pueden percibir como espacios públicos (precisamente porque están construidas para parecer un espacio público dinámico) pero son en realidad espacios en los que es a menudo imposible controlar los propios datos de los usuarios (por ejemplo, imágenes, textos), transformando estos datos en una mercancía y convirtiendo a los usuarios en consumidores (usados).

Palabras clave

Lenguaje; Neo-liberalismo; privatización; espacios públicos; internet y computación en la nube

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1. The strange relationship between Internet and immateriality

In this article I will demonstrate how the linguistic choice of using the term “user,” in the context of the Internet, has actually modified our (users’) expectations of the Internet from a “place” made by us to a “place” where we are subjected to the constant attempt of being reduced to consumers.

Let’s start by considering the following statements:

[I]magine a place where trespassers leave no footprints, where goods can be stolen an infinite number of times and yet remain in the possession of their original owners, where businesses you never heard of can own the history of your personal affairs, where only children feel completely at home, where the physics is that of thought rather than things, and where everyone is as virtual as the shadows in Plato’s cave (Barlow 1991, p. 1).

Computer users should be free to modify programs to fit their needs, and free to share software, because helping other people is the basis of society (Stallman 1999).

We stand at the brink of another revolution. This one will involve unprecedentedly inexpensive communication; all the computers will join together to communicate with us and for us [...] We may be about to witness the realization of Adam Smith’s ideal market (Gates 1995, p. 3-4, 7).

Everything up to date. Anywhere you are. MobileMe keeps all of your information in an online server, or “cloud.” So no matter where you go or what device you use, everything is in sync. And you can manage it all from anywhere using rich web applications at me.com.¹

One account. All of Google.²

Although these statements are not in chronological order, they summarize the chronology of the development of the Internet. When it started – back in the 1960s for a small group of people, but in the late 1980s for a larger and more diverse pool of users – the Internet was neither clearly defined, nor its utilisations very well understood. It was a network of computers, which people could access in order to provide and retrieve information. Moreover, it was a place – electronically speaking – in which people could ‘meet’ and share information, tips, and criticisms about their idiosyncrasies. As Turner (2006, p. 56) points out, the Internet in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a place where people were logging in with a view to finding other people like them with whom to share personal experiences through Bulletin Boards Systems (BBS). Barlow’s (1991, p. 1) metaphor of the Internet as a borderless place in which the very idea of property makes no sense anymore both fitted the description of that Internet and helped to define the future development of the Net as a place grounded on peer conversations and sharing, a Far West where ‘normal’ and ‘traditional’ rules about property and ownership needed to be rethought and adapted. This concept was so clear to Stallman – our second statement – that he created a movement, back in the 1980s, to ensure that the original spirit in which first programming, and then the Web, were developed remained intact: an activity based on passion, voluntary commitment, and magnanimity aimed at improving the life of a broader pool of people, grounded on the concept that helping each other is the basis of society. These two positions – a virgin territory that people can explore and that they can freely contribute to and take advantage of, for the sake of human well-being – were pretty common in the

¹ <http://www.apple.com/mobileme/features/> as on July 19th, 2008. This page no longer exists. The new Apple service that replaced *MobileMe* is called *iCloud*, and the ‘feature’ page (<http://www.apple.com/icloud/>) now reads (accessed April 22th, 2014): *iCloud lets you access your music, photos, documents, and more from whatever device you’re on. It’s easy to set up and use. And with features that give you peace of mind and make sharing simple, iCloud is also great with just one Apple device.*

² <http://www.gmail.com> as access on April 25th, 2014.

early 1990s, and they still represent a very strong position in the Internet as we know it. Yet a third position, here represented by Gates' statement, was starting to emerge.

Of course, the idea of using the Net as a way to perfect an otherwise imperfect market was not such a novel idea: interconnected information means also to share prices and availability of goods in a global market, so that the imperfect market in which we live – where geographical, legal, and economic constraints affect the possibility of acting in a completely and “truly free” market – could finally get closer to the ideal status of a market where information is perfect because it is complete and instantaneous. But the Internet became not just the place in which one can *gather information* about goods, but also the perfect marketplace itself, i.e. a ‘place’ in which one can *buy and sell* goods.

Yet, if the Internet has definitely affected local business, it did not kill commerce. On the contrary, it did not just increase the consumption but also promoted a consumeristic way of life worldwide; either through the Internet or through the traditional channels of distribution, goods are still sold, and moved from the producers to the consumers. If the Internet helped to spread the traditional commerce of physical goods, it nevertheless still has some issues with those goods that can actually be delivered directly through the Net, such as *immaterial* goods – movies, music, books, and any other form of expression – that had, for centuries, been protected by a conventional protection of its immateriality through copyright (even if periodically in turmoil when new inventions come out, or technology improves). However, although the Internet could reach a larger audience and even advertise immaterial products more effectively, the very nature of the immateriality of those goods was so close to the nature of the Internet that the two were often confused. In Barlow's statement this is clear: a copy of a file alters neither the original from which it is copied, nor the copy itself. Both are the very same thing: they reproduce the same image/writing/video with the same quality, features, and extension. (Vismann 2008, p. 123-159)

If for Barlow, and others, this peculiarity of the Internet was a reason for rejoicing – it is not just a territory to explore, but also a place where *everything* can be placed, and listened/watched/read at *no* apparent cost, since the constraints of the physical world had just been surpassed and defeated – for those who held privileges, such as quasi-property rights, this was very bad news. How to transfer the privilege of copyright to the Internet, which precisely works on copying data, and where the concept of “original” itself is unknown? The Internet, with its capacity for an infinite reproducibility and access to information, calls into question the very concept of the “original,” with the “history, duration, and testimony” that Benjamin identified as key to the idea of authenticity (Benjamin 1968, p. 221).

The fourth statement opening this section (*Apple's Mobile Me*) is one of the answers to this need for regulation, and it also is the one that it is the closest to our everyday experience. If the data is not physically located in users' computers anymore, the control over it definitely becomes easier for anybody else but the user. But the “cloud” is more than just copyright management. With the expansion of the so-called “cloud” services we, users, are relying more and more often on programs, data storage, and even computational power that is not physically located in our device, but rather elsewhere, on the Net. We rely so much on this omnipresence across devices of certain services hosted in the cloud that the last statement of our collection – *One account. All of Google* – takes on a new and sinister meaning in our everyday life. We do not own our documents. We do simply access one account, which is since the start clearly identified as “of Google”. Of course it is ours, we own it, but the traditional traits of ownership are disfigured.

But before going to the matter of clouds – i.e. what Google services and Apple's MobileMe (now “iCloud”) are – we need to understand what is keeping them afloat, i.e. platforms.

2. On platforms and on their progressive invisibility

Platforms are very fascinating artefacts, and 'platform' itself is an interesting word.³ From French *plateforme*, 'flat shape', 'ground plan,' platforms give the idea that things can be easily built on them, that they are a piece of reliable and solid ground, which can serve as a place to start from, rather than a place at which to arrive. A platform also implies horizontal relationships among social actors: a location where people are peers, in which opportunities and possibilities are in plain sight for everybody. I would say that a platform, as a plateau, is built to constitute a fragment of certainty in (or on) a magmatic social universe. This flat horizontality implies a kind of formal egalitarianism (see Brenneis 1987) in people's public attitudes toward one another. Of course, platforms can be either something that people progressively and painfully create and maintain (platform as an arrival point of a communitarian effort: open platform), or for which the required ongoing maintenance is provided by someone else (platform as an owned object: proprietary platform). The difference between the first and the second type of platform is very relevant in matters of governance: while the open platform is a product of a process in which all users take part, a proprietary platform is owned by someone who decides what it will become and what is or is not permitted. This does not mean that the voice of users is not heard: feedback, requests, reported problems, and so on are important forms of (unpaid) work that users spontaneously provide to the owner of the platform. However, it is also relevant that those voices have to be considered not as legitimate counterparts in a conversation between peers, but rather as entities addressed to a party who alone has the capacity to change things.

While platforms provide a flat ground on which new things can be built, they also hide what is beneath (Solove 2011, p. 155-172). For example, a considerable number of people use the website "Facebook.com", which is a social network platform, but few of these can actually program Facebook itself. In fact, in order to provide a common ground, they *must* hide what is 'down there,' which itself entails the elision of the complexities that form the very site of their interaction; through the production of accessible, "general" knowledge, heterogeneity is necessarily also obscured (Tsing 2005). Nonetheless, when a platform is established for the public, it will, in practice, be engaged by a diverse range of people: beginners, computer savvy individuals, programmers. All of them engage with the platform in different ways, and with different skills. Formal uniformity, then, is necessary, but the way in which this uniformity is reached varies according to the type of platform: while open platforms –having their programming code open to everybody to learn and use– perpetuate a more democratic and broad discussion about features and characteristics to take into consideration, proprietary platforms – which hide the code so only those who own the platform can modify it– actively discourage such a conversation. On the contrary, every attempt to modify proprietary platforms is read as a contract infringement, and the implementation of such modifications is framed as a criminal activity.

Still, both proprietary (e.g. Facebook; DropBox; Apple's iCloud and OS X) and open platforms (e.g. Wikipedia; SpiderOak; Linux) need both users and programmers (or, on a non-electronic platform, people using it, engineers building it, and regulators managing it; on an open platform these categories coincide) in order to be adopted by a larger number of people. The ambiguity of this "love/hate" relationship is even greater when the invitation to build upon a platform is followed by a minute articulation of rules, standards, and controls. In creating a common place for the proliferation of diversity, platforms – perhaps paradoxically – also take away the possibility of diversity. The accepted, and recommended, diversity is only in the outcomes, in the exteriority; but the ground, the mechanisms and languages that govern the core is uniform, homogeneous, and set by those who own the

³ So much that there is a book series devoted to Platform Studies (2014).

platform itself. You can be different, but within the limits of the accepted.⁴ Of course, in the case of open platforms the possibility of proposing changes in the inner level is still present for every user, even the newcomer. This possibility becomes increasingly improbable, however, as more and more people work on the platform, thereby increasing its complexity. But it is still present in principle (Stallman 1999). Proprietary platforms, on the contrary, do not envisage this possibility: if you want to work on the platform and to join the company you have to accept the rules *as they are*⁵.

Proprietary platforms are an example of the paradox of privately owned “common” places (Wrigley and Lowe 2002, p. 131-231, Augé 2009, Karrholm 2012, p. 119-129): almost like a shopping center, platforms are sites where it is possible to take advantage of all the facilities, but everything needs to be done in observance with the – already established – internal rules and norms. These are places in which it is possible to stay and proliferate, but very difficult to perceive as our own, to use for our own individual purposes, creating a tragic effect (Heller 1998).

3. On the substance of clouds

Since the coining of the term *cyberspace*, in Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), all electronic data has been conceived as belonging to those who produced it, because it is simply located in another dimension of the same physical space in which we live, but accessible to those who created it. When I create either a written document or an electronic song, I have the ownership in it (copyright and privacy are included in this). In civil law traditions, the right of ownership implies the right not just to accede to what I created, but also to destroy it whenever I want (*jus disponendi*). The question is, at this point, what happens to the object of property if I cannot accede to it whenever I want? Can I be the full owner of something if I store it somewhere on the Web, presumably in a foreign country, and I have to use a web-browser or at the very least an Internet connection to reach it?

This is not just a question that focuses on the immateriality of the good, but rather on the accessibility of it. For example, I can store my furniture in a garage somewhere around the world, and keep the key with me living abroad from there. Of course, having a medium (an airplane, a car, a horse, or something else) to reach it makes the access faster, but I can undoubtedly reach my goods in some way and I can dispose of them whenever I want. To reach them could be difficult, but not impossible. In fact I can even go by foot, and so I can reach them without mediation. When I cannot reach immediately (in the Latin sense of the word: without mediation) the goods that I own, can we say that those goods fully belong to me? Or is the right of ownership itself under question?

How is this different from the Internet? How can we translate such concepts in the “virtual”?

One question is to make public something on the Internet, which is perceived and treated as a public space. When we publish something on a blog, or on an Internet webpage, we are making it public. Evidence of this is that the opinions published both on a blog and on a website are considered as similar to every other opinion published in a newspaper, for example. They have to follow the rules of the State in which the server is kept. News published that damages the reputation of someone without clear evidence is subjected to the laws that protect the individuals. Also, harmful opinions have to be published under the responsibility of the editor of the website. The traceability of users ensures the “correct” use of the Net as an informational tool and the accountability in case of conviction. But here the problem

⁴ The contrary of freedom, one could say (Zizek 2001, p. 131).

⁵ “Terms of Use” are a clear example of this: users can either click on “Accept” or “Refuse” but there is no way to negotiate these “terms.” You are either “in” or “out,” and not “part” of any conversation defining such “terms.”

is exactly the opposite: how can we treat private data (that users want to keep secret and accessible only to the legitimate owner: for example, in the case of DropBox, GoogleDrive and similar services) stored in another private storage box that is not fully and immediately reachable?

The same problem occurs with regard to private conversations that go through the Net, such as e-mails, private chats, etc. But in this case downloading all the correspondence is (still) always possible, and keeping the data on-line is one of the choices that the users can make, but that they are not forced to do so. Instead, "cloud" computing presupposes that users are going to use the Net as the only resource to get access to the files. With some computers, such as netbooks and, increasingly, tablets, the possibility to save and store documents in the device is even more strongly reduced, if not prevented. Some of these computers do not have a hard-drive, and work using flash memory cards that provide limited storage. Even by improving the technology, and so creating bigger mass storage cards, the quantity of data that we need or simply want to save is increasing sharply, making it almost impossible to have the necessary mass storage to store locally everything we want. Furthermore, the new iPhone – as other smartphones – can benefit from the potentiality of the Push Notification Service. This service, which is embedded in all smartphones and tablets, maintains a constant connection with a server that would serve as an external CPU (the computer processor), collecting all notifications that are sent from third party servers to the user's gadget and, once collected, sending those to the device or devices associated to that account. This solution solves a practical problem to users (drying battery and CPU's performance because of the running of multiple applications in the background), but it also creates another fundamental problem, which is the dependence of the device on an external resource that is out of the user's control. If having a constant connection with the server helps the device to be more powerful and fast because it is economising resources, this also creates a strong dependence on the server.⁶

This is a platform problem – and for this reason it is a hidden problem, at least until we disastrously run into it: smartphones are as fast and great as the network they use, but when this is down – namely, our emails are lost, there is no signal, our account cracked, etc. – we realize how our devices are useless, and the data we thought ours is not immediately available to us.

If the computer market is changing, it is not just because needs changed in the past twenty years, but rather because new potentialities are being created. Users can join those marvellous changes and improvements, or be part of the old world, in which to have something physically indicates the right of ownership itself. As Rifkin (2000, p. 85) underlines, the benefit of having access to the resources and not necessarily ownership of them is the new status symbol and the sign that something is changing.

It is one thing to have access to copyright protected material, such as movies and music, through a sort of on-line rental service that ensures the access to what we want to watch or listen only if we are the legitimate subscriber to a rental contract; but it is quite another thing to have access (or not) to *our* private documents, to what we created ourselves and stored somewhere around the world. The concept of space —introduced on the Net during the 1960s and 1970s, when it was necessary to understand if there was room for property rights on the newly-discovered technology, and to protect software houses and copyright holders— is nowadays as blurred as a cloud, and it is still used only to meet new demands of both users and producers, but especially producers.

⁶ This idea is not new in computing. The so called "dumb-terminals" were one of the solutions proposed to meet the requirements of multitasking and multiple users, when computers were too expensive to be bought just for a single employee. Lots of dumb-terminals were sold and used, especially during the '60s and '70s up to the '80s, when the idea of "personal" computers became more and more common. See for instance Modern Mechanics (2011).

With the increased offer of “cloud” services, it is not just the concept of privacy that has been changed and modified, but rather the concept of property itself, and the concept of private as well. But this has changed in a unidirectional way: I am ready to give you all my data, my documents, photos, life, and you promise me to keep and conserve them, to share those things only with those whom I select, and to give them only to whomever is entitled to ask and obtain them. But if this promise, signed in a contract, is then broken, the prejudice is immediate and there is no possibility of fixing it. A piece of personal data shared with somebody who was not supposed to have knowledge of it could strongly modify relationships, works, even lives themselves.

In a world more and more afraid of terrorism, wars, and external mysterious threats, who can really ensure that this sharing is not going to be under a stronger and closer control, a way to select, discriminate, and incriminate people?⁷ Who is ready to affirm that it could not be a trap that we tailored ourselves?

4. Platforms of hegemony

Hegemony takes place in the disappearance of local discrepancies through the use of common sense (Gramsci, 1972, p. 202-206). I define here a fortunate technology as one that tends toward a technological hegemony. When I am taking it for granted, I am doing so simply using my cultural notion of common sense to make it disappear from my mental panorama, that technological advance is hegemonically nurturing in my mind. *Of course* there are roads in Canada, just as there are roads in the United States! But this is not *always* true, as experience could teach us.⁸

If fortunate technologies are disappearing from our mental scenario since they are fundamental for any development of further technologies, hegemonic technologies are perceived and repeatedly stated as necessary for the accomplishment of a task, but they could easily be ousted by alternative and equally effective technologies. Hegemonic technologies present themselves as the necessary gateway for the future, but they are actually actively creating the conditions for their fortune. What makes the difference between a fortunate and a hegemonic technology, then, is not the objects and procedures they both produce, but the way in which those are pushed in the mass consumption, the way in which they open us to a new possibility or they trap us into an inescapable future (Foucault 1978, part IV, Agamben 2006).

The fortune of a technology makes alternative technologies meaningless, at least so long as cultural hegemony of that technology is not contested. *Of course* petrol cars are better than electric cars, at least until we realize that petrol is really not a renewable source of energy, and that the delivery of petrol depends on wars, ships, and abundance of it on earth. At that point there is a huge question mark on the future of mobility. Do we really need petrol cars? Or, more fundamentally, do we really need cars? Until we stop relying on cars –until they stop being hegemonic, thus disappearing from our mental scenario– we will have difficulty imagining how different life could be.

To sum up, ‘cloud’ computing is a platform that is fortunate, therefore trying to reach the status of hegemonic. Its premise is that users are not really interested in being in control of their own data; rather they are much more interested in having

⁷ The “Facebook Drug Force” is an excellent example of this: see <http://nationalreport.net/facebook-drug-task-force/> as visited on Dec. 3rd, 2014. Although this “drug force” is a hoax, it shows the issue: it has become more and more easy to enable surveillance on people and to prosecute criminal behaviour, real or presumed, especially when users, as it happens on Facebook, *submit voluntarily* (very) private information to the public scrutiny.

⁸ Yes, there *are* roads in Canada as in the United States, but the speed limit, for instance, is expressed in km/h and not in mph. The road itself might be the same, but how we use it change considerably, making it a different social object.

easy and convenient access to whatever they want at that moment. Users are, in other words, conceived as consumers. As the Internet is becoming part of the everyday and the cloud more and more hegemonic, users can be sold services, making them the recipients of a service rather than part of a common work.

What alternative do we have to these services? Can we think of the Internet in a non-physical way, as a mental object not *in* which things happen, but rather *through* which they do? What tools do we have to think of our interconnected world not as a *space*?

5. Programming dialogues: cyberspace as dialogic information

We can think of cyberspace as a dialogue rather than as a space. Let's think, for instance, of how applications and programs are developed. A team of programmers who decide to release a program decide first of all what they want to do. Then they delegate the tasks, and members start to work together to develop different features. They cannot work completely separately because the application needs to be strongly interconnected in order to work properly. So they share pieces of code, bites of information. They set up the application as a continuous exchange of strings, which are pieces of conversation that programmers are having with computers. Both the conversation with computers and the conversation between programmers are absolutely necessary in order to build a reliable and stable application. Then, after the release of the first version of the application, testers and users (or users *as* testers) help them to fix some bugs, some minor problems that all programs surely have. The jargon itself helps us to interpret this as a conversation: the program is *released*, it is free to be tested and it is made available for discussion to testers and users, those who are participating in the creation of the next *version* of the program itself, that will take into account what users and programmers reported to them. It is not just a question of future, enriched versions of a product; rather it is another version of the same product that includes the suggestions, solutions to problems, and required features for a bigger audience of people who are using –and also interacting and modifying– the program itself, much in the same way as an argument is enriched and invigorated through criticisms and suggestions. But this conversation is also a fight, a struggle for the power that, through the language, gives the possibility of defining reality in order to stabilize the new territory, as Lyotard (1984) pointed out.

If we think of the Internet and cyberspace also in this way, all our actions on the Net are part of a process of communication. By putting a song online –whether our own or a copyrighted song does not matter– we are putting another element in the conversation, another point of view, as when we are talking to each other and someone sings a jingle, a song, or quotes a movie. But with a technologically higher content.

This type of dialogue could be seen as a game too, as a continuous back and forth of participation that points out something and then waits for the other to answer. For instance, I put the pawn in F4 and my adversary could answer with the tower in H6. But it is better understood not as a closed game, constituted by stable and fixed rules such as chess, but rather, as a card game, where the rules are infused with fortune, and strategy, and tactics, and different perceptions of chance. Someone puts a document online, and I answer with another document; someone posts a photo on a blog and I comment on it; I download a report or a sentence and my interest in this piece of information increases the statistics of that site, thus indicating the *public* interest in a certain argument.

If we think of the Internet as communication, as a way in which we can disclose our opinions, arguments, points of view, as an *interaction*, our own perception of the Internet and computers in general changes quite drastically. It is no longer a place where we can *find* things, like a mall. It is rather a place where we can *do* things, like participating in public discourse, expressing our opinion, influencing others'

points of view. From this perspective, hackers, serial crackers, movie and music counterfeiters (a.k.a. cyberpirates (Poier 2009)) assume other features and characteristics. They are no longer criminals, but rather skillful and glib talkers, brilliant conversationalists. Ambiguous characters, always on the edge between licit and illicit, of course, but still part of the conversation. If the asymmetry of knowledge was established and is maintained not to support users but rather to make users dependent on the last update, the last *product*, the most up-to-date news in technology, then we can think of the people who try to retrieve the information that allows them to take part in the conversation as people who are just making an effort to be part of the community. If we think of how broad and important the Internet is, we can also say that the effort to enter in the Internet knowledge conversation is an effort to be part of one of the key points of decision-making in contemporary social and political life.

This conversation applies also to the matter of clouds, as they are perceived today as a storage box in a facility owned by someone whose job is to keep our things safe and secure. What if we could all own a cloud, with all the ambiguities, fluffiness, and uncertainty of it? What if we stopped believing in the collective hallucination that we have to accept whatever terms and conditions we are proposed? Resisting being labelled – and ultimately treated – as a consumer, a “user” of technology, makes ourselves responsible for the things we create. We have the responsibility to resist the lightness of clouds, and to take responsibility for the things - thoughts, photos, documents – we share. I am indignant, for sure, that a business model has been developed so deep into our lives (just think of the public offer of Facebook.com to see how easy it is to monetize people’s lives on the Internet), but we can still do something, such as adopting and promoting open platforms where a sense of community is still nourished, protected, and promoted. We can think of ourselves as part of a conversation that uses a new, fascinating language that we *have* to learn, if we do not want to be treated simply as consumers of it. There are multiple examples of this use of the Internet over the last decades (think of the subversive use of Twitter during the Arab Spring; the survival of ThePirateBay.org despite multiple attacks;⁹ the conversations happening through YouTube videos): let’s just try to maintain such conversations alive, and to push for a cloud computing that is less of a service and more of a collective endeavour.

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⁹ Survival maybe at an end (see Zetter 2014).

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