



Unconference Critique Digitale Report- Oct. 21-22, 2021

Non-uses of digital technology

Panel C4 - Lausanne

22.10.2021, 10h00 - 11h00

Panel suggested by Valérian Geoffroy

Reporter: André Cardozo & Andrea Amato

Discussion leader and core topic presentation:

Valérian Geoffroy is conducting research about the non-uses of digital technology in the contexts of sports and tourism. He observed in particular the engaged practices like rock climbing, kayak and paragliding. He found that people started to use digital tools and then abandoned them after discovering that they were dangerous or inappropriate in some ways [see interview quotes and comments below]. Indeed, sometimes these tools can be disturbing, annoying or even dangerous. For example, while paragliding you must be focused.

Some interview quotes:

"When you travel, you live the moment intensely, you are there for what you have come to do, and not for the aftermath, not to show you were there, or to remember" Micaela

"T: It's a bit of a consumer society too, eh [. . .]. I did this, I've done that, people show, they do lots of things... There is less of: I dedicate myself to this art. They want to climb very high, do the Mont Blanc, go surfing, go to all the countries, without even knowing the country [...]"

M: I want to taste something, I want to have access to that. Where it gets a little boring is that, they don't want to taste to taste, they want to taste to show."

"Right now it's my recovery flights, I'm not taking a camera because I know I'm going to be focused on something else, and when there are people in the air or conditions are turbulent, it's better to be focused on what's going on around you than to take pictures, because it can be dangerous to take a selfie and not seeing someone coming right in front of you." Vivien

"We take pictures, so we look for the best point of view, for the beautiful picture, and in fact we don't really take advantage of things." Lydia

Main arguments in the discussion:

Adrien Tournier pointed the discussion on a non-binary way between use and non-use – thinking for example of <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01476630/>

André Sarli asked what do we mean when saying non-uses of technologies? Two ideas in mind: how technology was designed but used in a different way, or about the avoidance of technology? The way we frame it will guide the discussion. His research is focused on how vulnerable populations



appropriate technologies.

Enrico Natale pointed the non-use as a self-protection measure: organization of the day to not be connected all the time. A level of complexity of digital tools: some tools need a certain literacy, tech knowledge. Nicolas Chachereau asked how individual and collectivities lead to use or non-use. Laetitia Gern was triggered by the word "tool" in the topic title and thought about the notion "affordance" broadly used in computer mediated discourse analysis.

- The practice of taking pictures interferes with the experience of life. The idea of displaying someone's practices is a lot about displaying oneself. In the quotes there is a clear non-use of technology, not to take pictures, those persons want to engage in the deepest way possible with the environment. There is also a risk of these technologies: e.g. taking a «selfie» while paragliding, because there are other paragliders around you.

- People are seeking simplicity in their activity, sport as a «back to the root» experience, contradictory with digital technology // related to engagement with the natural environment (see above). Almost everyone said that they must restrain themselves regarding digital tools for their sport. It can interfere with the activity. It comes from a social norm. Valérien said that one of the strategies to restrain digital activity is to make and dedicate time space for non-use. For example, before bed, after or before the practice people tend to get restricted and dedicate that time for something else (concentration, photo sorting).

[FR]

- La possibilité de ne pas utiliser devient de plus en plus restreinte. On évoque le phénomène où la possibilité de se connecter (le virtuel) se superpose systématiquement au réel. Dans cet exemple précis, on ne peut pas décider de ne pas être connecté : les antennes et les infrastructures sont de toute manière présentes pour capter le signal. L'usage repose alors uniquement dans l'individu : il doit choisir de se connecter ou pas, consommer ou pas, sans qu'il n'y ait de réflexion ou de lieu pensé par le collectif non-connecté. Un rapport est fait avec les lieux sacrés, dans lesquels on ne se connecte en général pas. Pour Nicolas il y a une connexion entre les deux difficilement pensable : on met des antennes parce qu'il y a des utilisateurs, peu importe l'usage.

[EN]

- The possibility of not using digital tools is becoming more and more restricted. We evoke the phenomenon where the possibility to connect (the virtual) is systematically superimposed on the real. In this specific example, one cannot decide not to be connected: antennas and infrastructures are present anyway to pick up the signal. The use is then only at the individual level: a person has to choose to connect or not, to consume or not, without having any reflection or place for the "unconnected collectivity". A connection is made with sacred places, in which one does not generally connect. For Nicolas there is a connection between the two that is difficult to think about: antennas are put up because there are users, regardless of the use.



[FR]

- Adrien fait une remarque sur la perspective extérieure que l'on peut avoir sur les personnes qui font des photos (selfies) durant des sessions sportives. On a tendance à penser systématiquement que l'on est dans la présentation de soi (self) alors que cela peut s'inscrire dans une optique de partage de bonnes pratiques (entre pairs, communautés d'intérêts et de d'usages), comme aux débuts d'Internet (forums d'échange). Laetitia s'interroge sur les questions des métadonnées et sur ce qu'elles disent potentiellement des outils et pratiques des utilisateurs. Elle mentionne les indices métalinguistiques qui peuvent nous donner plus d'idées sur comment ces outils sont utilisés.

[EN]

- Adrien remarks an external perspective that we can have on people who take pictures (selfies) during sports sessions. We tend to think systematically that we are in the presentation of ourselves (self) while it can be part of a perspective of sharing good practices (between peers, communities of interests and uses), as in the early days of the Internet (exchange forums). Laetitia wonders about the issues of metadata and what it potentially says about users' tools and practices. She mentions the metalinguistic clues that can give us more insight into how these tools are used.

Some interrogations in the discussion:

- Asking about identity and communities around use and non-use as constraints linked to norms (we must share).

- We also can interrogate the choice concerning individual use or non-use: Do individuals organize their activities based on network availability ?

- What about other technologies that the sports practitioners use, non-related to the expression of oneself?