



## **Atelier of Arts and Technology II – Intermediate Dialogues**

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### **Abstract**

In this publication, the analysis of the university subject Arts and Technology II – Intermediate Dialogues, created and developed for Goiás Federal University's Distance Education course in Visual Arts, is proposed. This subject has special relevance in a distance learning course, for it makes possible to experiment, through Internet, as much in terms of learning tools as in terms of space for artistic experimentation.

The technological resources changed routinely life in the last decades, extremely affecting the Field of visual arts. This can be observed by the presence of digital photographs, videos, interactive installations and web art in museums, fairs, exhibitions and international Bienals. These digital-based productions promoted deep changes in contemporary sensibility and contemporary look, adding significantly to the creation of a new regime visual. These transformations in the Field of arts was explored in the subject from the specific approach of web art[1], that is to say, art that was produced and with and through means of Internet resources, which characterizes itself by existing completely and fundamentally online, and by being realized from specific softwares for composing world wide web pages, putting together different resources, for example, sounds, texts, graphics, fixed images and moving images and the like.

The subject, consisting in 92 hour lessons, presents an analysis of the historical process of art's and technology's articulation and its impact on artistic production. Using an approach of concepts of authority, interactivity, hypertext, manipulation, appropriation and hybridization, it proposes the development of researches and experiences related to web art, working with the net's available resources for the development of its personal propositions. The focus is seeing Internet as a reality of the world as it is nowadays, then think and develop more creative and sensible ways to deal with it. It bears emphasizing the fact that such a subject, with these contents, in distance learning, has never been seen before in Brazil.

The text created to explain the contents is an attempt to be a clear, objective and well-structured one, adequate to the straightforward and compact language of Internet. The part of instructional design is found in the patterns of distance learning subjects in Brazilian universities. The course's instructional design followed the pattern of a course pack, which, sometimes, shows more affinity towards the world of printings than that of cyberculture, but the presented tasks give dynamism to the proposal. The material was offered to the student in a virtual learning environment (Moodle, which has many interesting resources, if well utilized, is widely used in Brazil). Through forums and tutorials, just like present encounters, a break-even between content exhibition and student-content interaction is promoted.

The subject's template follows a model that can be applied in courses of many different areas, which shows itself as one of its limitations, once that the organic and structural relation between web art and Internet could be better explored with the utilization of a more specific template. An escape the



pattern could have been possible: titles and subtitles, box models for emphasizing (for content concepts), for reflection (for questions that should tickle the student's brain), for tips (showing the student how may he relate the contents with his real day-by-day life), to "know more about it" (for bibliography). As instructional design's work on the contents should take some things into consideration, such as the needs of learning (since established purposes for the subject, the whole course's purpose, specificities of the contents and, specially, the target public's demands), a communicating strategy should have been developed to satisfy such specific needs of the web art work. However, the cost of conceiving a differential interface to each content is higher than just applying a basic template to all subjects.

One of the answers to this issue is found in the pedagogical strategy utilized currently, which seeks to involve the contents, using from metaphors to interactive media, so as to obtain an engagement of the target-public in the tasks (to catch their attention, engage them emotionally, to arisen their curiosity, surprise them in the right moments...). The character of practical action on Internet oriented the subject since its first unity until the final work. In this first applying of the subject, back in last semester, an integrated planning where students of nine VLE's had to take up the challenge of setting up a poetic-pedagogical intervention. The subject Atelier of Arts and Technology II – Intermediate Dialogues gave conceptual and procedural foundation to the development of the intervention's proposal, in order to set up the project. The initial motivation to its development was based in the concept of a teaching city. Thus, each one of the proposed unities in the subject of Intermediate Dialogues was the base of research for the students to develop their own procedures of experimentation involving stages of their investigation.

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Ana Carolina Freire de Azevedo

The discussion proposed in Unity 1, which refers to the conceptual comprehension of cyberculture and cyberspace, had as experimental practice the setting up of individual blogs, where each student (with the help of a tutorial) developed every stage of building his own poetic-pedagogical intervention. In spite of being students of a intermediating resources-utilizing modality, the experience, in the beginning, was polemic, given to the fact that many of them are not very close to this universe. However, in the end of the project, each one of them had set up and "fed" their blogs with authorial contents, be them in the form of texts, gifs and unmoving images.

Unity 2, Places of Art in Internet, presented as practical activity the challenge of setting up a "trailer" of a walk proposed in the subject of Supervised Internship. This walk had as it purpose the search, in the local context of each student, of places that indicated possibilities of development of their interventions. The sites presented in the text, as well as the discoveries that came from these examples, were compositional referential. The discover that most of the projects presented in this unity proposes a dialogue between artists living in different localities was interesting, specially because, in a certain way, it directed one's steps through the concept of a teaching city.

Unity 3 presented the comprehension of concepts that relate to the logic of hypertext, was developed in the setting up of interface projects. Such projects had as their purpose the presenting of generating processes of the poetic-pedagogical interventions. This experimentation was fantastic! Not all students don't have a hard time with the world of manipulating graphic softwares; however, each one of them developed interface metaphors, inserting videos, links, integrating social networks and interactivity spaces. Although most do not have the notion of how to integrate such metaphors, the whole experience arised in them a conscience of how such spaces work and integrate themselves. From that, in interaction with a programmer, it would be possible to make the obtained set up interfaces used/functional.



While the developing of Unity 4, which proposes as the creating action a project of Web art, a proposal of a new integrated project came to rise, entitles “Ninho de Guacho” [Guacho Nest, in Portuguese], which has as its purpose to create, in cyberspace, a place of presentation and meeting of art educators, by means of integration of blogs that were set up during the classes period. The proposal was presented to students. A domain was registered, the concept was developed, but it was not began early enough in order to finish the project, so the unity was left to be done in the next semester. It was observed that the gradual learning from one unity to another articulated themselves and concurring for the final project, along the term, in an integrated and functional way.

There is an issue being studied in order to be better elaborated in future versions of the subject, and it is related to the usage of the images in the material prepared for the subject, which, mostly, illustrate the content, lacking, in some cases, didactic purpose. For example, each kind of box used to call the student's attention could have an icon indicating of which kind it is. There is a lack of images that conduct reflection, memories, relations with movies... Things that are not indicated in the contents. There are many things in the contents that could be well explored in the part of instructional design. The encouragement for remembering things is useful, for example, when the student is asked to establish relations between the technological present and the very lacking technological past they might have lived. There is a lack of imagetic resource that evoke this reflection, as to exemplify with an specific situation (e.g. letter versus e-mail) using images or videos (citations and fragments of movies showing the usage of letters back only 20 years in the past).

Also, there was sensed a lack of an offering of more places where feedback from the students could have been asked, and that is fundamental for them to go on and deepen their thoughts in the matter, directing them towards the process of learning. A better exploration of possibilities to give feedback by using interactive media (even simple media, made in PPT format, such as a succession of questions or images), or through tutoring, could have been created. Although in this first experience practical proposals to be developed were offered, there was no production of interactive media as a means of giving feedback to these procedures. It is important that, from time to time, it is showed to the student what has already been presented, what will be the next content, what is the importance of the next topic, that is to say, to establish internal links of content for the student to feel encouraged/curious in order to keep studying. When a question of reflection proposal is made, the expected response from the student must be clear, and not considering his answer is a mistake in this context, in which the usage of interactive web based communicating technologies is available and considered desirable. There is a website that offers some examples of interactive media made specially for e-learning (non-formal or informal education), such as a software (Articulate), which is coupled with PPT. It is one of the quickest ways to made interactive media, which allows many things. <http://www.articulate.com/rapid-elearning/> The issue of its high cost is not enough to explain why, in general, universities' distance learning courses are so traditional. Maybe the issue rests more in the viewing of education behind them, which relegates the form into a second plan in relation to contents, which becomes much more obvious in a specific content of Internet, such as the case of web art, dealt with in this subject.

An interesting aspect of this proposal and its experimentation was that all student-developed answers had as their research base the reflections made by authors and contents available in the Internet. More than mere employers of a device, in terms used by Flusser, they were the subject of their own procedure, living the theory presented in base texts, in actions that had as its purpose to connect the teaching, artistic and experimental world in different spaces. The development of this subject is considered of high importance, due to the fact that Internet is a part of distance learning and, in a course of Visual Arts, web art has to be present. The basic idea of this proposal was to encourage the

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viewing of Internet and cyberculture as a current reality, and to encourage the thinking of developing more creative and sensible ways of dealing with it. There is no escape from this reality, even by accusing it of many evils, neither is it possible to see in it the solution of all problems. Human beings, since the beginning of times, created their tools and, from their development, many ways of relationship among themselves and the environment were created. In contemporary world, it is no different, and digital technologies are a part of it. It is necessary to manage them by knowing them and obtaining from them completer ways of living alongside them, and this subject attempts to develop, in students, a little more capability for doing it.

## References

[1] A very lengthy collection of web art proposals can be found in the database of the research *Territorialidades na Arte Contemporânea: cartografia e mídias digitais* [Territorialities in Contemporary Arts: maps and digital media], under the coordination of the author of this article, available at [www.territorialidadeterritoriality.blogspot.com](http://www.territorialidadeterritoriality.blogspot.com).