

Conference for the “Universitat Permanent” Of the University Jaume I in Castelló

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The Internet for Seniors

I might rather prefer to change the title of this Conference to something like *<The Internet for Seniors>* because the word “mayores” in Spanish does not have the same meaning as in English. This is because in the Anglo-Saxon language the word *<senior>* regardless from age, involves:

- Experience
- Managing capability
- And performance based on speed, flexibility and creativity

In case that the *<senior>* is working in any kind of activity. Of course, if they are in-active it does not really matter if they are 18 or 81.

Therefore it is to this Senior that I would like to address my speech, though due to my excessive interference in the NN.TT area I might make some judgements which might be considered to esoteric or schematic.

But in any case I am still asking myself, **what does a man like me do in a place like this ?**

And I am going to try to answer this question immediately.

I am a professional in diplomacy¹ and for the moment, Ambassador of Spain in Denmark, where I have achieved a much deeper vision of what the built-up and development of the Information Society can be, specially thanks to the citizen’s intelligence and to the pragmatic analysis of the Northern Europeans, specially the Scandinavians and Finish.

¹ Please see, if interested, my CV. in my personal homepage <http://www.Docuweb.ca/~pardos>

Once we have arrived to this point I would like to ask you if the word “Internet” had any meaning for you in the last 5 or 6 years², around 1995. Could anyone of you answer me by showing your hands up ? Because we have to get ready for what the Internet is going to be in only four years more, around June 2004³.

1.- What is the Internet ?

I would try to explain, as clear and simple as possible, what the Inter-Net is, that is to say, an Inter-connected Computer Net. The following elements are necessary to have an Inter-Net:

- Digit/numbers, that associate each user to a telephone #, a name, a title or a dominion.
- It also requires to have similar connection systems, models/Standards,
- which operate some communicators/Routers
- and goes through channels/transmission means
- through which the **power and speed** of the Network circulates.

Well and then what ?

Numbers+standards+communicators+channels is that the Network of Networks ?

Well, yes and no, as Joaquín Sabina sings⁴.

In a matter of fact all this is the technical support of the Networks, but the Internet consists in:

- The dectronic mail: its like the mail by post, but without paper, envelopes, stamp or transport. It is instant, easy and so simple to work as a writing machine. (I actually believe that in 30’ of basic instructions for its use you can become able to do it)
- The WWW, (World Wide Web) also known as the Web which is very similar to a pair of glasses that aloud us to see things and jump from subject to subject just by using the so known “mouse”.
- The News Groups, is a unit of over 50.000 groups of different issues which are open to anybody who want to take part in them, add things or discuss them.

² I published, with difficulties, an Article in the Spanish newspaper “El País”, on the 2nd of May 1994 “The Information Highways”.

³ See my article “The XXI Century Internet: a space for “Education and Co-operation” in the Spanish magazine “Economía Industrial”, No.326, 1999-11.

⁴ See his CD “19 días y 500 noches” “Como te digo una co te digo la o”.

And *that is all*, I promise !

Is this difficult to understand ?

2.- Active presence of the Internet in the XXI Century

Shortly, but based on specific and verifiable facts, we can state that the Internet, with some roots in the Trading and Economic world, that is functioning now a days is already starting to work in the Cultural world and will shortly be introduced beyond the politicians personal Web pages of what is already starting to be called, [Digit@1](#) Politics.

I will try to explain it better:

- a) In *Trade* the issue has such dimensions, without mentioning successes such as the sale of books and in a close future of toys and electronic components, on the <<http://www.amazon.com>>. It seems that even IBM wanted to patent the idea of the *e-commerce*, what I mentioned in the Opening Plenary Session of INET'99 in San José, Ca. ⁵. In fact the electronic trade is already being developed by leaps and bounds to the extreme that this Internet activity of the *e-commerce* has been recently called by the Wired Magazine "The Digital Gold Rush"⁶. The Introduction of Fees for the electronic trade, its regulation by the Governments, the authentication of signatures, the security and in the secret transaction, confer the Economic and Trading area enough importance to be able to assure that they are already established upon the Internet.
- b) In *Culture*, the issue is a little "tricky" if we have to be sincere, due to the lack of definition of the own word and the concept of Culture. In a matter of fact the different Languages spoken today on the Planet, the different traditional dances, the gastronomy or the Education, not to mention other things, are all in the same "Box" or "Bag" of Culture in general. And you will agree with me that not all of them have the same significance, and absolutely not the same "Societal" effect among the Internet users or our fellow citizens.
- c) Finally, in *Politics*, the increasing steps are being very fuzzy. From the "invention" of the Internet apparently by famous politicians such as

⁵ See on INET'99, Wednesday, 23. June, Opening Plenary Session, Keynote address, by Dr. Irving Wladawasky-Berget, General Manager, Internet Division, IBM, United States <http://www.isoc.org>, when I pointed him that the e-commerce belongs to all the Internet users and not only to IBM, as well as that in the developing conditions of the Internet, the UMTS and mobility should be included together with the e-mail and the Web.

⁶ See Wired Magazine, July issue, 1999, front page.

Al-Gore, to the attempt of presenting the modernity of the Internet on Webs and on endless home pages of the traditional politicians that not only say the same, as others, but also act like them. For this reason the attitude of the Spanish Senators about issues like claiming the Right to have a flat rate and a universal access for all the citizens to the Internet, are examples that encourage to continue this search. One day, the high or the even very high levels of the traditional power will begin to understand that after or before the Greens, today already settled in the traditional politics, in its wars and battles, a generation with no age to unify it, but with enough maturity to reach proper self-confidence, attempts to make a [Digit@1](#) Politics that breaks all the traditional diagrams of power which curiously are also started “bottom-up” as the traditional electoral processes, but in which exists an unanimous consensus about special matters as the ENVIRONMENT, the ICT and the refusal to any kind of CENSORSHIP, not admitted previously or personally by the own [Digit@1](#) users.

Moreover, there must be admitted that, though with some difficulties, some Digit@1 Internet Politics are being drawn in the horizon which dare to talk, with no restrictions, about concepts as territory, currency or international politics as marks of the ancient nation-state model or against a sovereignty with small letters, when the sovereignty lies in those people and regions that, with their language, culture, gastronomy and even their leisure, have been able to generate a Planetary inter-action beyond the conventional rational borders to directly influence the ENVIRONMENT and the ICT to which we all should have **equal access** and without censoring and whose development and applications⁷ we all have to agree by ground consensus.

3.- “Special” and additional facilities of the Internet for people over 55 years old

It is obvious that those who approach the Net at that age need:

- To Demythologize the Information Technologies: can you type? Even just with one finger?
- Would you like to have more knowledge about the things you like?
- Could you start a “digital module” course of 3 days?

⁷ See Dave Sutherland’s et alt. It’s called “Regulation of the Internet: a Technological Perspective” See <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/it05082e.html> about the impossibility of Censoring the Internet as it is not economically or technically possible to put a “device” in all the Servers of the Planet due to their increasing number. As John Gilmore, my college at the BoT of the ISOC and creator of the Sun Microsystems, would say “The Internet not only rejects censoring but it always avoid it with agility and intelligence. Furthermore it surrounds it escaping from it”.

- Would you like to continue?

In that case you might be able to join the Permanent University courses at the UJI and become in three days a fairly able Internet user.

- Technology will get better and easier day after day.
- There will be more teachers and they will be better (towards full employment)⁸
- **Let us hope** that the prices will be lowered and that the **Flat rate**⁹ will become our support in this battle, as we are getting close to a ...
- And lets hope that the connections, after the National Plan for Optic Fibre Cables¹⁰, will get better.
- As well as the official¹¹ support to the IS, its creators¹², executors¹³ and users¹⁴ in general.

4.- Some cases: “Sí, Spain” 2.1. and others:

- Origin of “Sí Spain (NCF November 1992)¹⁵

⁸ Despite the migratory problems, the USA has authorised the issue of 200.000 visas for a five year period to people who would like to work in the NN.TT. And in Denmark, in spite of being a smaller country with a smaller population, 70.000 visas in the same conditions and with the same objective, have been issued a few weeks ago.

⁹ It is important to know the Flat Rate (Tarifa Plana) Origins, <http://www.tarifaplana.org> to which you should subscribe after reading these lines, as the Flat Rate is stopping and reducing the use and expansion of the Internet in Spain. A real population movement is necessary to demand this connection/coupling right to the Internet. It is a similar situation to the demand of Human Rights and basic Liberties that took place at the end of the XVIII Century, to be exact is the Bill of Rights of Virginia, 1774 or *Déclaration des Droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, 1789.

It is unacceptable that Telefónica, with such great incomes as they had in the last quarter of 1999, continues speculating about making important acquisitions or sales but do not consider giving the Spanish Internet users a Flat Rate.

¹⁰ A very spectacular case that places Sweden ahead in the IS is the fact that at the end of the year 2002 all homes at this country will be connected to Optic Fibre Cables with a huge band width, which infostructure will be the support to all kind of IP protocols. Sweden will then become ... a cable society for the use of IP-centrism.

¹¹ See the Declarations of the First President, Mr. José María Aznar, at the Symposium held the 12th of February 1999 <http://www.simposio.es> as well as the numerous interventions of the Minister for Industry, Mr. Piqué and the Minister for Fomento, Mr. Arias-Salgado.

¹² It is necessary to support all these “reasonably” innovating Projects in this New Economy, which are receiving the collaboration of the regional and municipal organisations. Some discreet Budgets and Projects have already been made. For example the ESSIMUR project <http://www.essimur.carm.es> whose authors are just waiting to put their conclusions into practice.

¹³ Which could be and are being some City Councils and any kind of local Saving Banks such as “Kutxas”, “Caixas” ...etc. Some of them, as the “Confederación de Cajas Vasco Navarras” are sponsoring the Summer Course of the UPV (University of the Basque Country) about the Digital Enterprise <http://www.upv.es> and others as “Caja Murcia” are financing the IV International Sessions of the INDOEM (Information, Documentation and Enterprises) <http://www.indoem.um.es>

¹⁴ From which number all kind of speculations are being made, though it might be close to 3.000.000 users at the end of 1999, and as the Financial Times states in its magazine “Connectis”, No.3, pages 4-5, Spain would at the end of the queue but with excellent growth rates in mobile telephony and general growth specially in the number of Network users, in the percentage of the population on-line and in the number of mobile phones where Spain surpasses France(36,2%) in a 40,1%, USA (28,4%) and Germany (24,5%)

- Development of the Turbot War, 13th of May 1995,
- *First Embassy in the World in the Web*,
- Contacts with the *First Spanish searcher, Dónde?* and
- The *first Spanish Web*, and
- The *first Interactive Map* created at the University of Jaume I, by Jordi Adell¹⁶.
- Contacts with the *first Spanish civic Net*, the Tinet in Tarragona, thanks to Manel Sanromá¹⁷ and
- [Ciez@net](#) and many other projects.
- My participation in the Internet issue and some burocratic and administrative “problems”.

Copenhagen, 2000.06.02

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¹⁵ See <http://www.Docuweb.ca/INET96/pardosi0.html> our Presentation to INET' 96 in Montreal on 1996 with the title “The Internet, World Diplomacy and the Third Millennium” where you can find a detailed history of “Sí Spain”.

¹⁶ See the Magazine “RED” Year 3.Month 11.page 27 or <http://www.webred.com>

¹⁷ See aswell Ibidem. Page 29 or <http://www.webred.com>