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Peer to Peer Ubiquities

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Communication read by Vincent Mabillot for the AOIR 5.0

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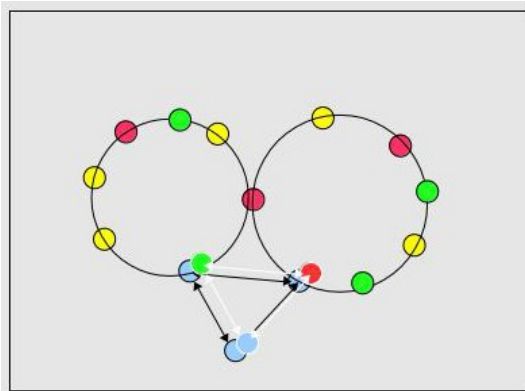
This speak is a part of an analysis we after a study about peer to peer (P2P) community that we did a couple of yea ago.

First I give you the main results of this study. After I'll talk about three categories of ubiquity that we identified in P2P uses. *P2P users* are engaged at the same time or during their uses in many levels of ubiquity: one we called the *cyberubiquity* (to act here and perform on the net), the second is *multitasking ubiquity* (using different types of computer tools or cimmunication devices at same time), and last, the *multiP2P networks ubiquity* (the competence of users to be on different networks at the same time).

Peer to peer users

In our study, we noticed four kinds of roles in P2P communities.

- The **expert users**, that we also call sometimes, sentinel users. In their communities they are specialize in P2P technologies, they follow the evolotution of P2P Networks and anticipate crisis. They Generally going on developpers forums, news sites and frequent P2P expert users communities. Their share directories are frequently invisible for non buddies users.
- The second type of users are **animators**: We can also use the term of moderators, but animators is better because they activate the life of a community. They are communication links and facilitators beetween users. They promote their favorites network and ask to each other where to go when a network shut down. They create chat room, website and help newbies. They generally had a big sharing directory. Muchmore you find files on a network, much more you promote it as an Ali Baba's cavern.
- Third type of users are **average users**: They easely using P2P technology. They are principally here to collect files. For a lot of them, it' s an opportunitisc system to find files for free. In this part of the community, you may find sometimes lechers, but if they are identified as lechers, communitu keeps them out. Lot of average users contribute to the network with selected directories, files shared is like an exchange money. They go on chat and messenger devices to optimise their use and keep contact with **C**.
- **Last users and newbies**. They don't really understand how it works. They are here because someone tells them that it' s an easy way and an eldorado to download files. When they discover parallel chats, they go on to learn how to use the software and how to find file. It' s the beginnig of an addictive use.



- Experts - Sentinel
- Animators
- Averages
- Newbies

We also notice a superposition of communities as we saw with expert users. Many users belong to different communities (XXX) and their roles could change in each way. We'll meet example in the following of my speech.

Cyber Ubiquities

Real user (actor) and computing presence (character).

The synchronicity of P2P device allows a kind of ubiquity where you act in front of the computer and perform as a character as/in the network stage. We notice three types of ubiquity :

- **The ombilical ubiquity** : people living out of their countries or far of their communities find with P2P a system to keep a link with their affective roots.
- **"Mardi gras" presence** : they are using P2P presence as a mask, behind their nicks they could perform different personalities and have an opportunistic behavior due to the facilities to anonymize their real personalities.
- **Contribution presence** : it's an ideological position taking roots in Internet original utopia : a sharing world. The P2P softwares are an easy way for non-geek to contribute themselves (with their share directories) to universal resources.

Multitasking Ubiquities

During the conference, Ted Welson asked us this question : "What can we do with a computer that can't be done with paper ?"

Multitasking is maybe a part of the answer. It's the hability to have parallel task. It's the capacity to share attention, presence, in different uses concerning or not the same goal. We identified 3 types of multitasking ubiquity :

- **Optimization of computer activity** : instead of watching for their down and up loads, average users do something else.
- **Multi internet users** : during exchange, users chat around, visit websites, do emails, use instant messenger, with different goals : occupation but also to find help, to have fun and to prevent crisis. You can note that first P2P popular software (Napster) included chat or messaging system. And after the first crisis, Napster's users began to exchange ICQ or MSN ID.

- **Diversion** : It's a subversive use of multitasking operating system. Lot of users do P2P at work, because connection is better than their own. And they mask their P2P activities with real or fake & politically correct application.

Multi P2P networks Ubiquity

Now we concentrate our observation on a specific multitasking use. When users run different P2P networks at the same time.

- **Compulsive collect** : in boulimic behavior certain users are on different networks to find quickly a file with search engine before talking with other users.
- **Comparative search** : average users use different network for their properties and their specific communities. Example : French users go on e-mule to find Dvix, Souseek or Kazaa to find music.
- **To prevent crisis** : when news telling a network should shut down, users test other networks to transfer their practices and their communities.

The consequences are the growth of P2P protocols to resist to major attacks and the adaptive behaviour of users. And if at the beginning there are team or company behind P2P protocol, centralize servers net and client software, we notice an evolution with an atomisation of the code development and the logistic organization.

Conclusion

So what P2P ubiquities reveal internet uses, social behaviour and ideology.

- **an automediated knowledge management of collaborative tools and cultural resources** : people are learning themselves how to work, exchange with online synchronous collaborative tools. They are training friendly their mind to new form of cooperation in their works and their "real" communities.
- **They develop alternative archiving strategies** : "a chaotic archive" with a strength : biggest source catalogue and weakness : the impermanence. But it's a good introduction to Hakim Bey's concept of temporary Action Zone.
- **And my last conclusion is that P2P uses redefine internet users as contributors**, not only as targeted consumers.

Thanks for your attention.