Collective play in a LAN house in Brazil

Date : August 17, 2012

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In a study conducted in a LAN house [the common term for a LAN gaming center in Brazil] in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a certain factor drew my attention – the way in which the boys who frequent the LAN house play *games* in a way that is very different from that expressed in the concept of the relationship individual-machine. What I observed was a type of collective game, which revealed the need for us to have a broader view of the context in which the communication

mediated by computer takes place, to not run the risk of thinking of the phenomenon of the Internet in a highly restricted manner.

In my field experience in a favela of Rio de Janeiro, the favorite game of the youth at the LAN house was *World of Warcraft*, one of the world's most popular MMORPGs - *Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game or Multi massive online Role-Playing Game* – online games in mass for multiple players.

In the context of the universe studied, I observed a learning of the game through strong sharing. In addition to the fact that the users were connected to and interacted with other players online, there is great interaction with other people who are in the physical environment of the LAN house. The youth, whether in front of the computer or not, communicate intensely, exchanging "tips" about the best strategies and actions to be taken in the battle. The "teaching" is passed from someone who has more expertise in the game than the others, a role that is alternately taken by multiple actors – the attendants of the LAN house and the more experienced players. The learning revolves around tips about the general logic of WoW, its step-by-step procedures, the best strategies to be adopted, the meaning of the words and expressions in English and even the best way to handle the mouse and the keyboards to achieve greater agility in the combat.

In addition, it is common for the navigation to be truly shared, when someone who has more expertise takes the mouse from someone who is in front of the computer and plays for a certain time. There may be two, three or four people around the same computer, with one "officially" protagonizing the adventure, and another, with more expertize, taking the mouse at times to advance in the steps, and others commenting on the game or simply joking. In a certain way, there is a counterpoint here with the original idea of the *personal computer* – in the realm of the *LAN house* collectively used machines are found, wiyh users operating collaboratively, creating a type of "shared personal computer".

I now intend to continue research to investigate this question more deeply. I believe that it points to the importance of considering relations in the field of the Internet in a broader manner than the subject-machine dichotomy, thinking of the interplay of interactions that take place in these practices and in the cultural systems that serve as a background for the experiences with the technological media.