

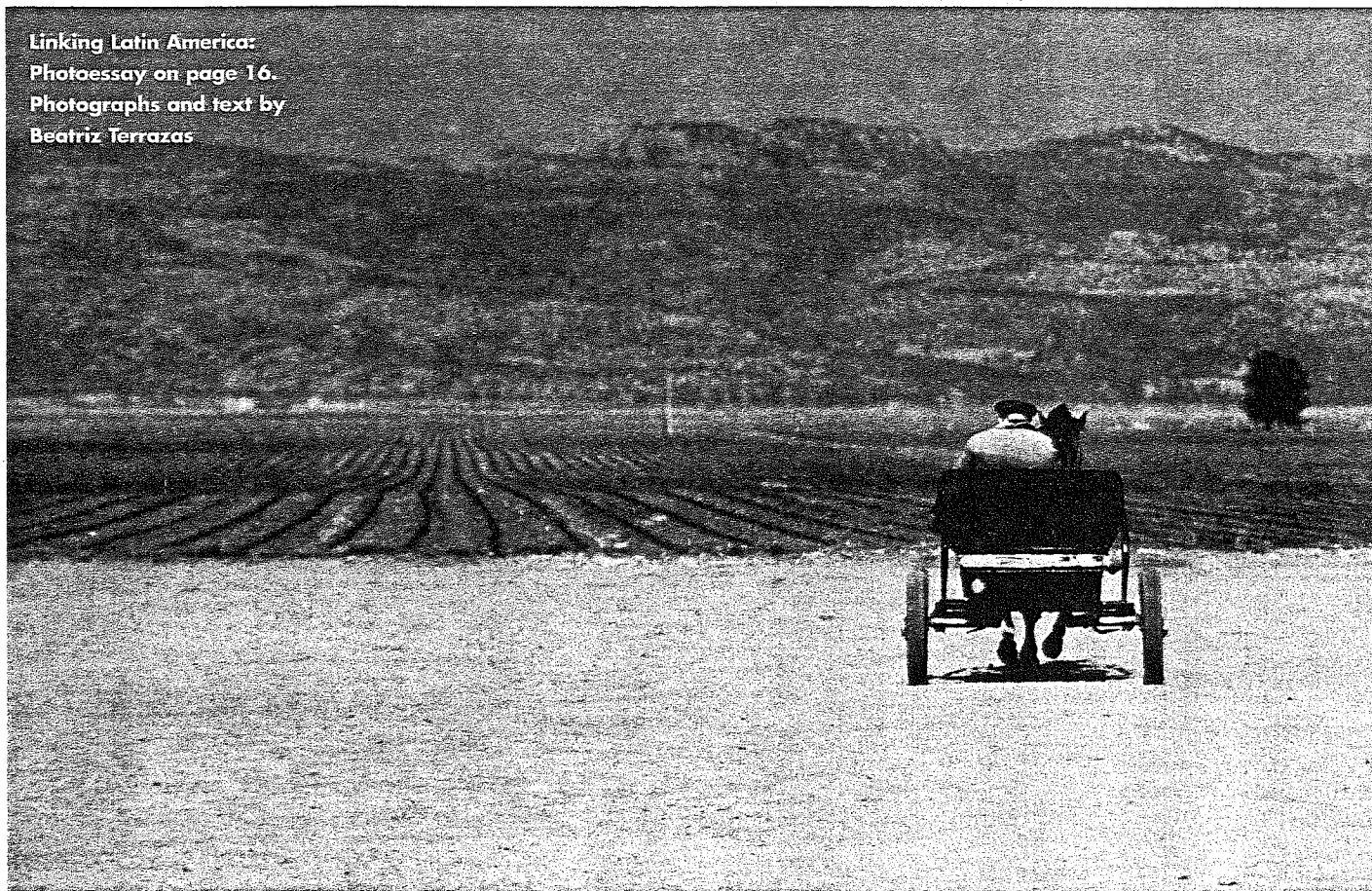
DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

DRCLAS NEWS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY • WINTER 1999 NEWSLETTER



Linking Latin America:
Photoessay on page 16.
Photographs and text by
Beatriz Terrazas



The Internet and Latin America

Looking into the Future, Preserving the Past

BY JOHN LINGER

This issue of *DRCLAS NEWS* is devoted to the Internet's effect on Latin America. As the person in charge of all Harvard News Office websites and the editor of a daily newspaper produced in May 1998 for the Second International Harvard Conference on the Internet and Society, I thought that I knew a lot about the ways in which people use the Internet. But even I was a little surprised when a journalist friend, visiting recently from Colombia, sat down at my computer and called up press releases from the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or FARC—Colombia's largest guerrilla group and one of Latin America's most feared and most successful Marxist movements.

My friend explained that all the armed combatants in Colombia now have websites, and some, like

A Mennonite bishop in Chihuahua, Mexico still uses his horse-drawn wagon to go to and from church. The Internet's technology can be used to preserve traditions and link us all.



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the FARC, in addition to posting communiqués online, have incorporated “push technology” to send press releases via e-mail to interested parties, such as journalists. The FARC’s e-mail distribution system, in fact, works very much the same as the online shopping service I’ve signed up for through Amazon.com to be notified about new books.

Since the Internet is a revolution, it should come as no surprise that revolutionaries use the Internet. But as the stories in this issue of the *DRCLAS NEWS* show, the nature of the Internet makes all of us revolutionaries. Tim Stumph, the Information Technology Coordinator for DRCLAS, found a new job and a new career with the Web, as he recalls on p. 6. But it is not an exaggeration to say that we all have new jobs and new careers because of the Internet, whether we have recognized that yet or not. We are living at the dawn of an age of information the like of which has not been seen since Gutenberg revolutionized the world by revolutionizing the printing press.

The writers who have contributed to this newsletter have looked thoughtfully into the future and brought us back a vision—not just a vision of a bridge to the 21st century, but what we can expect to find once we’ve crossed that bridge. But the writers’ intent goes much further than fortune-telling: as Juan Enríquez suggests, the Internet we wake up to in the future is dependent upon the Internet we envision now; the questions of access are much more than infrastructure concerns, but are moral concerns, as Debora L. Spar argues on p. 23, in her essay “The Public Face of Cyberspace: The Internet as a Public Good.”

Straddling two ages, as we are—the Age of the Internet and the Age Before the Internet—means that we face a world of contradictions. For example: though the Internet is a form of mass communication that crosses national borders as though they did not exist, it is largely inaccessible to the masses in many countries, and especially Latin American countries, as Juan Enríquez points out in his article on p. 3. Though “cybercafes” offer Internet access throughout Latin America, as correspondent Madanmohan Rao reports on p. 21, the cybercafes mostly are used by wealthy tourists, while, as Enríquez points out, “Chile and Argentina have about a third fewer telephones per capita than the U.S.; Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela around one sixth less”—and no phones means no Internet access.

So many of the new dilemmas discovered by looking at the Internet are really the same old problems brought forward into a new age, as Lawrence Lessig declared in keynote speech at “One planet, One Net: The Public Interest in Internet Governance,” an International Symposium at MIT in October. “There isn’t a special set of dilemmas that cyberspace will present,” Lessig writes, “just the familiar dilemmas that modern governance confronts: familiar problems in a new place.”

Yet, as Deborah Hurley discusses in her article on p. 19

about security, secrecy, and civil liberties on the Web, the sheer power of the Internet as a communication tool increases the stakes considerably. “For most of mankind’s existence,” Hurley writes, “communication was, of necessity, evanescent. Now, and into the future, as more and more interactions take place over various information media, a greater proportion of communications are, and will be, recorded and recordable. They will be more durable and much easier to duplicate and distribute than ever before.” As a classic horror movie slogan declared, “In space, no one can hear you scream.” But it is even scarier to realize that in cyberspace, everyone can hear you whisper.

The Internet makes us all revolutionaries.

So it seems that society as a whole should consider the Internet with a great deal of caution, while individuals and groups continue to find ever-more-amazing ways to use this powerful new communications vehicle. An innovative program based at the School of Public Health, for instance, is giving women in Latin America, and women around the world, access to important information about reproductive health and rights. As the story on p. 18 describes it, “The Global Reproductive Health Forum at <<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/health-net>> supports a number of easy-to-access, interactive information services, including e-mail discussion groups, electronic journals, and online conferences.” Who among us could have imagined such a powerful system even a few years ago?

But, to look into the future, one can imagine even more powerful systems that bring us all closer together. Welcome to a much smaller world—a world where we all, no matter our politics, are revolutionaries.

John Lenger is assistant director and editor-in-chief of the Harvard University News Office. He has visited Colombia twice recently.

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The Internet and Challenges to Governance

Borders, Business, and War

BY JUAN ENRÍQUEZ

ON A SLEEPY NEW YEAR'S DAWN, 1994, foreign news rooms were reading two very different news briefs on Mexico. One described the first day of NAFTA. The emphasis was on the peace and prosperity of North America. A second brief came from a group in Mexico's southern jungle that claimed to be on its way to take over Chiapas. A few minutes after sending their e-mails, the Zapatistas started a conflict that continues to date.

Although guerrillas have a presence in more than twelve Mexican states today, the Zapatista rebels are by far the best known. They inaugurated a new form of guerrilla warfare, which brought together bullets and cyberspace. While few have access to the Internet in Latin America, it is proving to be a very effective way of communicating with the developed world.

Over the past four years, as the government has killed dissidents, limited TV coverage, and expelled foreign activists from Chiapas, a series of cyber-sites have sprung up to fight back. These link people interested in Mexico, indigenous affairs, human rights, peace, feminism, and grass roots movements. When a community is under fire an electronic network ensures a rapid reaction from abroad. These efforts have been so effective that Mexico's Foreign Minister characterized the conflict as a "war of ink and Internet."

Despite the example of the Zapatistas, Mexico, and most of Latin America, is way behind in Internet access and knowledge industries. While approximately 26% of Americans use the Internet, 0.6% of Mexicans do. In mid 1997, the U.S. had 1.3 million domains while Mexico had less than six thousand. Regional divisions within Mexico are even starker. If these issues are not addressed, it will be hard

for Mexico to maintain control of its borders, destiny and economy.

Using the Internet to conduct war is simply one symptom of massive changes taking place throughout the world in our ability to transmit, understand, and use information. Global telecom, a \$600 billion industry, is expected to triple within a decade. It is changing the way business, war, social discourse and governance occurs throughout Latin America. As groups and individuals undermine elite control over information, state sovereignty is quickly giving way to complex

shared sovereignties. The Net can help the poor communicate cheaply, and minority communities can gather knowledge and support beyond their contiguous territory. At the other extreme, the Net is also forcing what are already a country's largest companies to become far larger.

The Internet is simply the latest in a series of global communications trends that are altering the form and structure of governance. Already governments are finding it much harder to control the work, trade, and ideology of their citizens. Communications will continue



Lola Alvarez Bravo, "Architectural Anarchy of Mexico City"



"My suggestion for an Internet site for doing research on Latin America is at the University of Texas. The address is: <www.lanic.utexas.edu>. From there, I hook into almost every media and government web site in Latin America. I do research on the congresses in Brazil and Chile, follow election results, track public opinion data in El Salvador, and read newspaper and news magazine digests from all over the region," comments Frances Hagopian, Visiting Associate Professor of Government. The website received the top number of recommendations from Harvard faculty as a research tool.

breaking down formal state borders:

It is Cheap to Communicate. Most of the world is reducing trade barriers. As goods flow so do people, data, and ideas. The cost of communicating and comparing systems and ideas across borders has dropped radically. Before 1927, it was impossible to make a transatlantic phone call. Then, three-minute phone calls cost \$200 in current dollars. Today it costs cents. Compared to the 1950s it now costs less than one third to fly somewhere, one twentieth to make a phone call, and about one seventieth as much to get a computer to access data.

Sprint charges ten cents per minute for some calls from the U.S. to Britain and Canada; it may cost three times more to call your neighbor from a pay phone. As the Internet and cellular networks, which do not require massive building and cabling, grow, the cost differential between local and long distance communication will become almost irrelevant. Not surprisingly, telephone use is growing very fast, particularly across borders. In Mexico, between 1990 and 1996, the number of international calls increased from 169 million to 491 million. One fifth of all long distance calls in Mexico go across borders. Immigrant communities today retain far closer ties to their homelands and are able to compare living conditions and ideologies.

You Can Communicate a Lot Very Fast. Think of phone-cable-satellite systems as pipes, to get more information you can increase the number of pipes and you can increase the capacity of each pipe. Driven by falling costs, both are happening very fast. Establishing a transpacific line cost \$73,000 in 1975, \$2,000 in 1996 and an estimated \$200 in 1999. There are over twenty times as many transatlantic and transpacific connections today than there were a decade ago.

Each pathway is also wider. The bandwidth of communications systems is tripling every twelve months. In 1996, about four billion bits of information flowed into computer screens from the Internet every hour. Over the next four years, this was estimated to grow three hundred times. The transmission capac-

Visitors to the FZLN Web Page (%)

U.S.	32
Mexico	28
Spain	6
Network	5
France	2
Italy	2
Brazil	2
Argentina	1
Non Profits	1

ity already exists. In 1998 the fiber optic cables could transmit over twenty five billion bits per second. Computers that cost as much as a television will be able to access and download the equivalent of large university or research institute libraries. Any nation, with good communications and smart people, will be able to grow jobs and salaries in the knowledge sector quickly.

The Problem is not Going to be Capacity to Transmit. Throughout Latin America, privatization, competition, and investment are leading to huge infrastructure backbones. Mexico has already increased the number of digital phone lines from 29 per hundred people in 1990 to 89.8 in 1996. Areas that are not hard wired can start receiving data via satellite. The Morelos III has a footprint from the southern U.S. to Argentina. Antennas developed by Hughes Electronics will bring data into homes at a rate 1000

to 2000 times faster than current phone modems.

The Problem is Going to be Ability to Access and Process. Income and education differentials are critical. Many will not have the capacity to pay. Media access throughout Latin America is low. Chile and Argentina have about a third fewer telephones per capita than the U.S., Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela around one sixth less.

These differences are even more worrisome within a country's borders. In Mexico's southern states there are three to five phones for every hundred people, in northern states there are three to four times as many phones.

Building a knowledge economy is impossible without access to communications. These differences, if not addressed, will widen income gaps and potentially lead to very different world-views within the same border. Yet, most Latin states lack a clear government policy to support and strengthen broad data access. Costa Rica is an exception. They have made enormous investments in attracting top computer companies like Intel, invested in communications infrastructure, wired almost every school, and instituted English courses in public schools. This contrasts markedly with Mexico's policy of limiting educational expenditures and, in 1999, increasing taxes on phone calls 15%. Open and cheap communications and extensive training for a broad sector of the popula-

Media Access

COUNTRY	TVS PER 1000 PEOPLE	PCS PER 1000 PEOPLE (1995)	INTERNET HOSTS PER 1000 (JULY 1996)	NEWSPAPERS PER 1000 PEOPLE
U.S.	776	328	313	236
Canada	647	192	143	215
Singapore	362	170	128	336
Argentina	347	25	3	143
Brazil	278	13	3	55
Mexico	192	26	2	116
Colombia	188	16	1	63
Korea	115	121	11	412

Source: World Bank. World Development Indicators 1997. p. 284-87.

tion are essential to development.

Future Wealth and Jobs Depend on Understanding and Using Knowledge and Communications. It is hard to explain how quickly the world's economy is shifting. In 1997, for the first time, the world's phone lines carried more data than voice. By 2003, some estimate that total voice traffic will be only 2% of total traffic.

Borders and governments can no longer protect many workers from international competition. The Internet makes many work visas unnecessary; if one can work at home, in an

Average Banking Costs

(\$ Cost per transaction)

Visit to Client	5.00
Client goes to Teller	3.40
Client goes to ATM	0.30
Banking by Phone	0.10
Internet Banking	0.01

Source: Belltech. Published in *América Economía*. November 19, 1998. p. 209.

office or in a hotel room, one can surely work abroad with little interference. This is how Bangalore, India became the second largest software producer in the world. It's products and labor cross borders in seconds with no interference. Most of its work is exported to the U.S., where Nielsen estimates 70% of corporations are online, rather than Asia where 1% are online. The incentive to restructure is enormous. In an industry like banking, dealing with a customer's requests on line costs .03% of what it costs to have requests taken care of by a bank teller. Most new jobs will involve dealing with information, not with people.

One Language, and a few Companies Worldwide. It does not matter whether you speak or write in Chinese, English, Dutch or Spanish or whether you are using a computer, camera, or cell phone, your data is transmitted in the same language. Information is increasingly digital; it is 1's or 0's. Telephones, TVs, pagers, VCRs, cell phones, CDs, movies, computers, financial networks and newspapers are starting to use and

import data interchangeably. Because all data from and to these machines is in a common language we are seeing an enormous convergence of industries and businesses. The result is mergers across industries and mergers within industries. Several of these mergers are valued up to \$70 billion. This is close to or larger than the 1995 GNP of all Latin American countries except Brazil, Argentina and Mexico.

Within the Latin American context, national television and telecom companies can seem massive, but in a global context they may become irrelevant. Telmex, which controls 70% of Mexico's long distance and cellular markets, has accounted for one third of the Mexican stock market in the past. Nevertheless, as borders open, Telmex will have to grow very quickly to remain competitive. Government regulators will face difficult dilemmas: Should the company grow even more dominant within Mexico, by merging with a company like Televisa, or should it partner with companies abroad.

You Can Rule But You Cannot Hide. Telecom is a critical element in setting agendas, and, sometimes, in maintaining governance. As Latin America has democratized, a freer media, and the ability to gather and disperse information broadly are often leading to questions about "the way things have always been done." To the dismay of many governments and companies, newly empowered citizens and reporters are publicly exposing practices that were "understood."

Exposés have lead to the resignations of Presidents Collor, Pérez, and Bucaram.

The Internet will accelerate media freedom throughout Latin America. One could control press and electronic media to some extent, but it is much harder to censure thousands of different actors. Worldwide, Internet hosts went from 4 in

1969 to 727,000 in 1992 to over thirty six million by July 1998. In Mexico hosts increased from 50 in 1994 to 10,257 by August 1998. Who could possibly oversee and censor all these sites?

In conclusion, we can define trends, but it is hard to map all the changes occurring as communications redefines borders in business, national security and political coalition building. It is just as hard to map the Internet. America Online defines it as "the world's newest and fastest growing country, possessing neither borders nor immigration restrictions, nor formal government, nor regulatory apparatus; a self-governing entity with a strong but benign commercial sector and a disputatious population, yet no standing army or formal legal system."

What is certain is that country borders can and are being crossed with little regard for regulation. This is generating a new and very powerful parallel sovereignty across state boundaries. States that do not acknowledge that these changes are taking place, and that do not train and support their populations for dealing with an open knowledge economy, will be neither richer nor more secure in the future.

Juan Enriquez, a DRCLAS Research Associate, is currently writing Flags, Borders, Anthems, and Other Myths, a book on the breakdown of borders. He was previously CEO of Mexico City's urban development corporation and a negotiator in the Chiapas peace process.

BOOKSTORES

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<http://www.karnobooks.com/>

Howard Karno Bookstore, California. Well-organized, bilingual website for new, rare, and out-of-print books on Latin America

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It's easy to do a book search at this local Cambridge bookstore. Website in English, organized by categories.



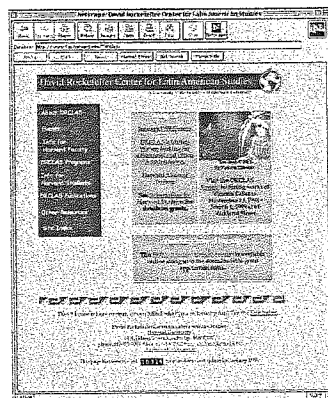
DRCLAS: Creating a Website

<<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>>

BY TIM STUMPH

I STILL VIVIDLY REMEMBER THE FIRST time I surfed the World Wide Web. It was the spring of 1995, flowers were in full bloom, and I had just moved to Boston and was working as a temp in an office at Harvard. A co-worker pulled me into a back room to the one computer that had an Internet connection and I spent the next two hours exploring far off corners of the world. I was able to see pictures of the terrible tragedy of the Oklahoma City bombing that had occurred only days earlier. I visited the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, where I had attended school just the year before. I was hooked. Now, almost four years later, I still feel that same amazement when I find an interesting website or see groundbreaking technology. Today, in my position as the Information Technology Coordinator for the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, I find myself on the other side of the Web. I spend a good percentage of my time modifying and creating pages for the Center's website at <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>>.

When I began my job in January, 1997, I faced the daunting task of creating an organized website from the mountains of printed information about the Center. My predecessor had



constructed a basic site that contained a calendar of Center events, a few links to other sites and the job posting for the position I was hired for. Everyone on the staff had his or her own ideas of what the new website should look like and how it should function. During a series of meetings, the following themes were constantly emphasized; the website needs to be constantly updated, it needs to contain information on Latin American related events at the Center, Harvard and the greater Boston area, and should be a gateway to other

Latin American resources on the Internet. With those ideas in mind, and a month and a half of construction time, the new DRCLAS website was unveiled in March 1997.

What a disaster! Comments on the website ranged from "too crowded" to "user hostile". I realized that I had tried to put too much on one page and had not thought enough about navigation and organization. During the next few months it went through many changes. I quickly replaced the tacky orange and brown logo with a more suitable color scheme. The content was reorganized into logical sections that more accurately reflect the way the Center is structured. I learned that a good website is not simply based on its content, but needs to be easy to navigate as well as interesting to look at.

Today, the website is in its third major revision since its creation. With an average of a 1000 visitors a month, it has become a recognized source of current information on the Web. A casual visitor can find information on job opportunities related to Latin America, an online edition of the Center's monthly calendar *DRCLAS DATES*, links to other Latin American sites, a directory of Harvard Faculty, Fellows and Professional Staff indexed by country of interest and research topics, and much more. Harvard faculty and staff can find information on grants offered by the Center, an online course guide describing all Latin American related courses at the University, and opportunities that exist at the Center, and at Harvard, to become more active in Latin American studies.

For more information:

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>

Tim Stumph is the Information Technology and Grant Coordinator for the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. The DRCLAS website can be found at <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>>. Comments can be sent to <tstumph@fas.harvard.edu>.

AROUND HARVARD

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>

Our website. See above.

<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/hri/>

Interesting human rights website with lots of Latin links

<http://www.doaks.org/Pre-Columbian.html>

Dumbarton Oaks' attractive website, focusing on Pre-Columbian studies, includes gallery tours and an online library

<http://www.laspau.harvard.edu/>

A useful guide to academic and professional exchange programs with Latin America

<http://www.peabody.harvard.edu/>

The Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology's website is now bilingual in English and Spanish

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rl/spanishprog.html>

Romance Languages and Literatures hosts an imaginative site, including the standard concentrator's handbook and faculty guides, as well as links to Spanish comics, a history of flamenco, and other offbeat subjects.



Researching Latin America: from Under Informed to Overwhelmed

A Personal Chronology of Changed Communication

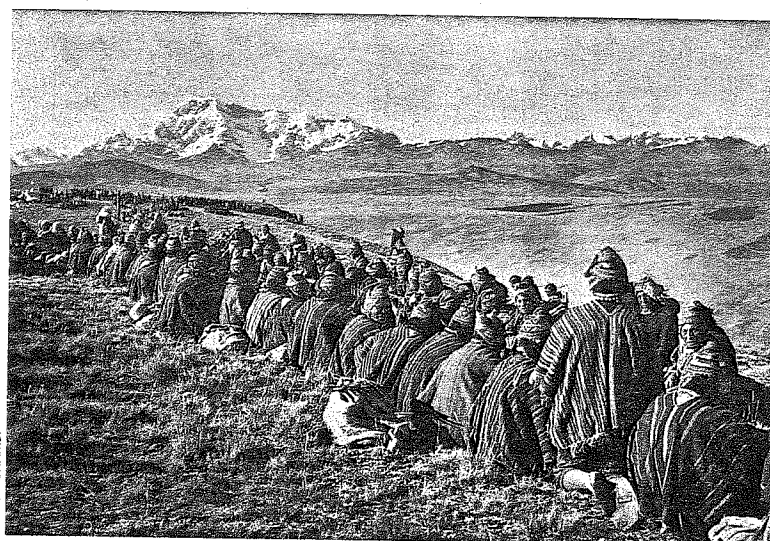
BY JACK SPENCE

Editor June Erlick observed my testimony to an Immigration judge that touched upon the change the Internet has made in doing research on Central America. She suggested an article on the topic. I protested that I was rather new to the Web, but pleading ignorance did not sway DRCLAS' tenacious editor.

THE INSTANT OUTPOURING OF Web information on the Pinochet case got me to thinking about communications on my first trip to Chile during the Allende presidency. I was armed for Ph.D. research with a portable typewriter twice as big as a contemporary laptop and carbon paper. Before the trip it was impossible to keep up with rapidly changing Chilean politics. *The New York Times* had one reporter covering all of South America. Once in Chile communications with home were either slow and uncertain (mail—a week to ten days) or somewhat faster, exceedingly expensive, and also uncertain (telephone). A small group from the U.S. put out a monthly newsletter in Spanish with information about the antiwar movement in the U.S. We had friends in the U.S. mail clippings, so our “news” was stale. (Ed. Note: The group was portrayed in the film *Missing*.)

Calls to my girlfriend in Boston would take thirty minutes to four hours to go through (if they made it). Our relationship was not going well. Phone fights would lead to mutually enraged silences—a dismal irony. The one who would break the silence was not the peacemaker, but the one paying for the call.

Around 1979, I began to analyze U.S. media coverage of the emerging crisis in Central America. Few U.S. scholars had background in



Martín Chambi, the first indigenous photographer in Latin America (1891-1973), captured this image of peasants on a lunchtime break by the snow-covered Ausangate mountain, Ocongate, Cuzco, Peru, 1934. Chambi's work can be found at <http://garnet.berkeley.edu/~dolorier/Chambidoc.html>.

Nicaragua or El Salvador. Though I was hardly one of them, I thought that the rapidly expanding coverage was off base. Alternative sources of information were few and far between. People returning from short trips could be debriefed, journal articles gradually began to emerge, and I began to travel to the region.

But by the standards of a decade earlier media coverage was massive. In 1982 the *Times* had 613 stories on El Salvador, 149 of them in March during the Constituent Assembly elections crucial to U.S. policy. In 1972 the *Times* had had 4 tiny stories on the crucial Salvadoran election. From 1970-1978 network evening news shows devoted 3 minutes to El Salvador, but eleven hours in 1982 alone, according to a 1996 Boston College doctoral dissertation by David Krusé. By then TV stories were beamed by satellite in contrast to shipping films during the 1969 Honduras-El Salvador war. In a dramatic tableau, Tom Brokaw himself could be seen live scooping up shell casings from a fire-fight at dawn on Salvador's 1982 election day. (Viewers were not informed

that he was a five-minute drive from his luxury hotel.) Around then, I became apprehensive about my spending so many hours watching TV.

I typed articles on media coverage on an IBM Selectric. A major advance over my old portable, the Selectric permitted error correction (backspace, lift black ribbon, lift white ribbon, overstrike, lower ribbons, strike proper key). I bought one of the first VCRs to tape the evening news; it cost \$900. By 1983 I had joined the personal computer revolution with a “portable,” Kaypro, the Model T Ford. The keyboard attached to the computer with its 5” screen, but transporting it was like carrying a suitcase filled with bricks. It had 64K of RAM. With no hard drive programs had to be loaded in, used, and then removed. Sound primitive? It seemed like a miracle.

In May 1989, I helped launch an effort through a new group called Hemisphere Initiatives to monitor the Nicaraguan elections, along with the United Nations, the Carter Center, and the Latin American Studies Association (LASA). Typewriters were obsolete (though not in Nicaragua)



The Internet can be a quick and inexpensive tool when an organization needs to denounce a human rights violation. However, in a summer research project, Andrea Acevedo, coordinator for the HIV-AIDS section of the Harvard School of Public Health's website, found organizations face many practical problems.

"One group said it was a struggle to decide whether to do e-mail or leave their only phone line free so that they could provide services," she observed. Constantly busy lines mean that groups either had to connect early in the morning or late at night—an incentive to not connect at all.

and the UN, not an organization that stints on equipment, had radios in their 4X4 Land Cruisers that could reach Managua, New York or South America. Fax machines were available, though costly. LASA teams had truly portable laptops with 40 MB hard drives and could draft and edit reports while together in Managua.

But if our Boston office needed a UN election report it meant a trip to the UN Managua office, one-page-at-a-time photocopying and faxing over fragile phone lines.

In 1989, e-mail was becoming common, but it was virtually non-existent in Nicaragua. By 1993 e-mail was ubiquitous in the U.S. and common in Central America. On a Fulbright in El Salvador in 1993-94 I could download text documents, though at 1200 baud per second they had better be short. Phone lines were much improved. Indeed MCI and AT&T were selling Salvadorans a calling card which would put them in touch (collect!) with their loved ones in LA, enhancing personal contact while also cutting the flow of remittances.

By 1994, Central America had dropped off the mainstream media's agenda. But back in the U.S., I could now download three dozen pages a week of news on El Salvador posted on e-mail news conferences, and "talk" with friends in Central America (though there could be a twelve hour delay in transmission.) In 1981 one scraped for information, by 1994 managing it was the central problem. Then came Chiapas, a rebellion with a keen sense of the media and which used the Internet to circumvent news media blocks in Mexico. Chiapas received major U.S. media attention, but that was small in comparison to an absolute explosion in Chiapas e-mail traffic.

And then came the Web. Here's a site with 34 Latin America magazines and dailies from 14 countries. Want recent election results? The latest IDB economic data on each country? How about reports on wine production in Argentina? Coffee futures? Need a book on Colombia held by only two libraries in the U.S.? A journal arti-

cle can be searched and faxed within hours (for a hefty fee), though faxing now suddenly seems primitive compared to downloading at 56K. And 56K on my home modem seems tediously slow compared to the new fast wires at the University.

I've been doing research on the peace process in Colombia. I can get coverage not just from the Bogotá daily, *El Tiempo* but from various regional Colombian papers. With a meeting between newly elected President Pastrana and the guerrilla chief "Tirofijo," a guerrilla before Pastrana was born and then Pastrana's trip to Cuba events have been hopping. For the January 16-18 weekend, I downloaded 22 news articles just from *El Tiempo* and the magazine *Semana*.

Why leave home? Sometimes I even get the feeling that I don't have time to go to Latin America because I will be missing such a huge flow of graphics and data from my many "book marked" locales and e-mail conferences and communiqués that I could never catch up on my return. Indeed, I may never have to go outdoors again, not even to the library, and I could order groceries from Home Delivery.

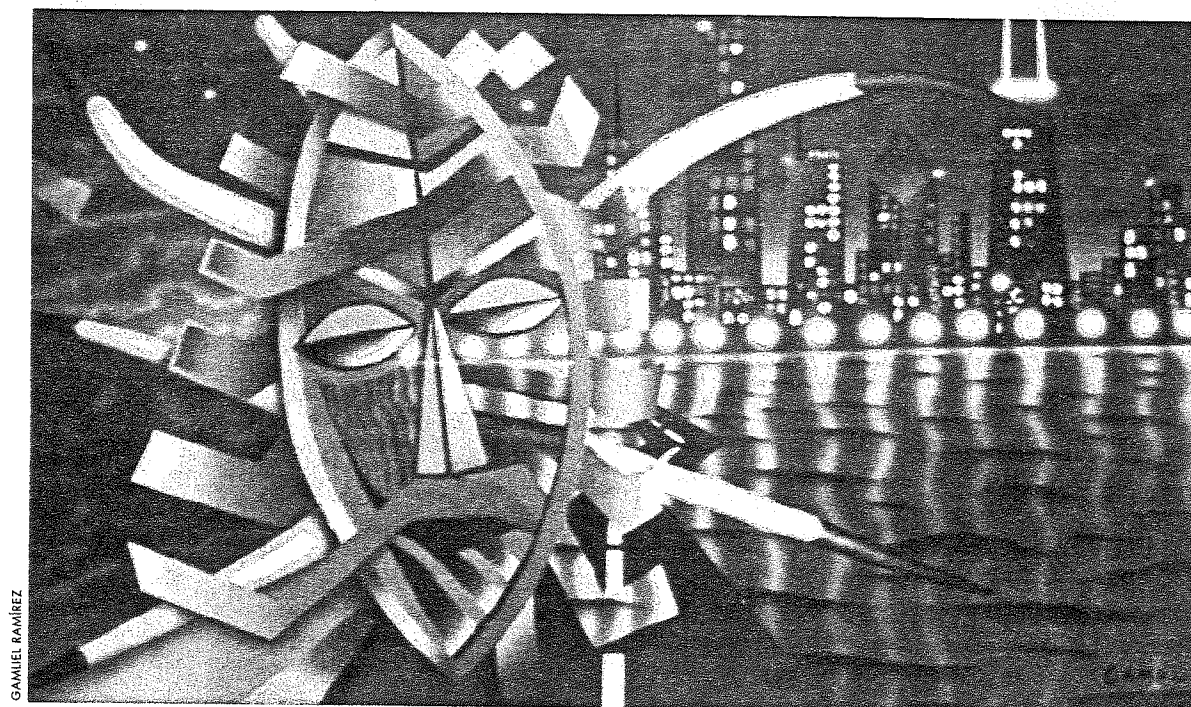
But then I discovered last July that my hotel in Bogotá had a "Communications Center" replete with fax machines, computers, e-mail, the Web. Caught in the interminable traffic of Bogotá on the way to an interview I fretted that I was wasting time not being "plugged in" at my hotel.

Two days later I was in Barrancabermeja, a hot, muggy oil refining center in the mid regions of the Magdalena River, an area being contested by about every armed and unarmed group in Colombia. I'm sure e-mail was around, but I didn't find it. On the weekend, I was surprised at having great difficulty making an international call from my hotel where the phones, in general, did not work well. At mid morning, I was walking with a Colombia colleague to an interview. I was sweating. I could smell the refinery. I could smell the smells of the outdoor market. We passed a newly painted, old style, hotel on the banks

of the river, the former headquarters of Tropical Oil Company my colleague told me. Small boats plied the muddy Magdalena. Some were carrying refugees from downstream fleeing from attacks on their villages by rightist paramilitaries.

We attended a meeting of local political and social service groups preparing for an influx of several thousand refugees. There was a mixture of urgent intensity and banter in the room as several fans roared. At lunch we interviewed a Jesuit economist, Fernando de Roux, who is helping run an internationally funded development project in the Middle Magdalena region. We ate rotisserie chicken at plastic tables with our hands in plastic bags to fend off the grease. He had reams of data in his head ranging from the equivalent of a GDP for the region (approximately that of Spain on a per capita basis, but the money doesn't stay home); to the rules of life in areas controlled, more or less, by guerrilla groups, to the politics of mediating kidnapping releases. He rapidly sketched on a napkin a map of the municipalities touching on the Magdalena over a 150 mile stretch and which groups were shoving and hauling in which places. We met some of the refugees, then moved on to other interviews. In the evening we met with Archbishop Prieto in the cool sanctuary of his residence and heard his nuanced analysis of the political situation. Afterwards in the mild evening air we saw couples strolling on a Saturday night. The refinery gas jets were flaring in the sky. We made our way to an open-to-the-street restaurant for cold Águilas, steaks and fries. You can't get these things on the Web.

When he is not surfing the Web, Jack Spence teaches in the Political Science Department at UMass Boston and heads Hemisphere Initiatives, a research group that analyzes peace processes. He served as President of the New England Council of Latin American Studies last year.



GAMIEL RAMÍREZ

"El Pasado es Present," by Gamaliel Ramírez, was the logo for the LASA 98 XXI International Congress in Chicago.

LASA and the Internet

Building Electronic Bridges

BY SUSAN ECKSTEIN

WHEN I BEGAN MY TERM AS PRESIDENT OF THE LATIN American Studies Association one of my priorities was to explore ways for LASA to make better use of electronic resources. I also wanted to make the Association useful to members sharing common interests and concerns. With these objectives in mind, I encouraged the formation of so-called Sections. I also sought funds for virtual LASA Congresses, for putting the Association's main scholarly journal online in a manner allowing search services not possible in the "hard copy" version, and for developing electronic bridges between LASA scholars and other communities of people interested in Latin America.

Now, a year and a half after my presidency began there are 22 so-called LASA Sections. Their focus varies considerably. Some focus on specific countries and regions. There are, for example, Sections on Peru, Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela, Brazil, Paraguay, and Central America. And there are Sections that focus on such themes as Latinos, Gender, Environment, Scholarly Resources, Gay and Lesbianism, Medicine and Society, and Business and Politics. These Sections, many of whose members met collectively face-to-face for the first time at LASA's 1998 Congress in Chicago in September, now conduct their everyday existence in a virtual swirl of e-mails, online forums, web pages, and electronic bulletin boards. LASA members already belong to an average of 1.5 Sections, and some Sections have hundreds of members. Any 25 or more LASA mem-

bers can form a Section of their choosing.

Given the expense of phone calls and faxes, the time-consuming process of printing and mailing regular letters and paper newsletters, the delays of even "airmail" to Latin America, and long turn-around times, e-mail makes it possible for sub-groups in LASA to easily share information and regularly keep in touch.

"There is no doubt that the availability of e-mail has increased the organizational activity and intellectual exchange among Section members," observed Suzanne Oboler, who co-chairs the LASA Latino Section with Pedro Caban. "And, of course, it has also served as an outreach tool since it has allowed us to increase the Section's mailing list." Then there are members of the Colombia Section who like exchanging bibliographic suggestions with one another, for research and teaching purposes.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, LASA Central American Section co-chairs Harry Vanden and Tommie Sue Montgomery sent out hundreds of e-mails, disseminating disaster relief information, interesting news reports, letters to sign, and website data. The Central American Section, swamped with some 230 names ranging as far afield as Japan, recently created a listserve, an electronic mailing list.

The Latin America-Medio Ambiente (LAMA) Section is perhaps one of the most veteran international listserve in LASA. "For LASA members interested in the environ-

ment, the initiative to form a Section was a natural extension of our earlier decision to create an international listserve on environmental problems in Latin America; this emerged from a suggestion by members of a LASA working group on the environment," noted David Barkin, an economics professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Xochimilco in Mexico City. Members of LAMA regularly communicate electronically with over one thousand people concerned about Latin American environmental issues, including individuals and groups that do not belong to LASA. Through electronic means members share information and discuss environmental problems. Barkin adds that "discussions are sustained electronically in at least three languages and we can trace at least five books and more than a dozen collaborative research projects to communications initiated on our listserve."

The energetic Web Manager of the Section on Venezuelan Studies, Margaret Martin, reports that the section uses electronic communications to keep in touch both with developments in Venezuela and with each other. It offers online a directory of members, with information about members' current research, as well as minutes of their LASA Section meetings for those unable to attend. In addition, it provides links with other groups concerned about Venezuela. Much of the section's communication is bilingual. The section members see their function to be a community resource for their membership, for research and teaching. They highlight sources of data, and they have an online calendar where they post calls for papers, conferences, and other activities of interest to members. They even provide links

and information about chat rooms where news on Venezuela is discussed. They find that not only LASA members but individuals in government and business have been visiting their homepage.

Meanwhile, the Labor Studies Section has set up a listserve. It is planning a webpage, and has begun compiling a member database that will categorize members by research interests, recent publications, and research projects. The Peru Section also has a listserve, and is thinking about a webpage. So is the Latino section, with the specific goal of "bridging the national and cultural 'gap' between Latin American and U.S. Latino members of LASA." According to the Latino Section's Oboler, the soon-to-be-designed webpage would contain information specifically related to Section members, as well as information about Latinos in the United States and links to other Latino websites.

Ronald Waterbury, chair of the newly formed Rural Studies Section, perhaps best summed up the LASA electronic effervescence with his comments: "In summary, the creation and operation of this Section was enabled almost exclusively electronically. Of course, it could have been

formed via snail mail, telephone, fax, etc. However, could is one thing, would is another. I don't think it would have been formed were it not for electronic communication. I certainly would have not done it."

And there are possible new frontiers for Sections in the near future. Sections might oversee their own chat rooms. Discussions might revolve around specific issues with periodic public debates.

In addition to the electronic frontiers being forged by the Sections, the Latin American Research Review, LASA's long-standing scholarly journal, will soon be

online. LARR is the premier international interdisciplinary journal dealing with Latin America.

With support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, LARR will be placed on the World Wide Web. People around the world will be able to access the journal in a manner that many now cannot. And the Internet will allow for new LARR services.

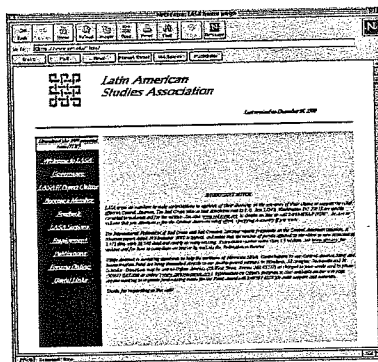
On a newly formed homepage, LARR will post information on forthcoming articles and review essays, multilingual abstracts of current and upcoming articles, and other information about the journal (including subscriptions). The webpage will also have links to other sites useful to persons interested in Latin America.

In addition, back, current, and future issues of the journal will be put online. Readers will be able to search for keywords, article titles, authors, and publication dates, to retrieve articles of interest. This service will allow LASA to provide a new and extremely useful research tool.

One of our goals is to use advanced information technology to generate and coordinate Latin American scholarship, to broaden the range of people who can benefit from it, and facilitate communication and information-sharing about Latin America. Another goal is to provide more services more rapidly than in years past.

Thus, LASA plans to conduct increasing amounts of its business, and to develop new services, online. LASA's homepage will include information in a timely manner. Its hard-copy newsletter comes out only quarterly. Forthcoming conferences, research and study opportunities, and job listings will be posted as information is received. LASA also plans to develop a searchable research database on the current interests and activities of its over 4,000 LASA members. This database would be accessible to members and nonmembers alike and help build bridges, for example, between journalists, academics, and the business community around shared concerns. The database should also foster cooperative research among scholars globally. Both members and the wider public will thereby benefit.

Last but not least, LASA plans to produce routinely "virtual Congresses," based on the digitization of papers presented at our Congresses every 18 months. This service makes papers written by LASA members around the world available, through the LASA homepage, to specialists unable to attend Congresses or unable to obtain



copies of papers at the meetings. It also extends the reach of scholars who present their work at the Congresses quickly—to anyone interested anywhere in the world.

These electronic developments and others should serve to transform LASA. They should also strengthen and broaden communications among the community of people and groups worldwide interested in and knowledgeable about Latin America. Our knowledge and understanding of Latin America should improve in the process,

and our capacity to facilitate human rights, economic developments, and other resources there should improve in turn.

For more information:

<http://www.pitt.edu/~lasa/>

Susan Eckstein is the 1997-1998 Past President of LASA, whose presidency was hosted by DRCLAS. She is a sociology professor at Boston University.



LASPAU is currently developing new training programs in distance education and the strategic use of information technology to help Latin American higher education institutions improve teaching and research through technology. The Aragón-LASPAU Distance Learning Program delivers course content from U.S. universities to Argentina via videoconferencing and Internet technologies. A new Fulbright workshop in information technology is being developed for June 1999 for Latin American university faculty participating in the Fulbright-LASPAU Faculty Development Program.

LASPAU New Directions

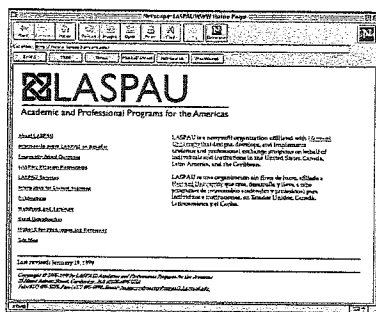
A Decade of Technology Training for Latin American Higher Education

BY WINTHROP CARTY

SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE COMPUTER, the ratio of cost to processing speed has *doubled* every 18 months, resulting in increasingly powerful and affordable equipment. Latin American universities now have an enormous opportunity to leapfrog from two decades of decay to unprecedented capabilities for quality research, teaching, and learning. Equally abrupt and significant is the challenge to assimilate this pace and volume of change. The results to date have been mixed, a concern LASPAU is working hard to address through its technology programs for the region.

A nonprofit organization affiliated with Harvard University, LASPAU designs and implements academic and professional programs for the Americas, and has been involved in technology-related activities since 1989. With support from IBM and the Mellon Foundation, LASPAU provided training in academic applications of the Internet to more than 4,000 Latin American professors, librarians, and researchers. These LASPAU workshops helped introduce universities to the Internet and its potential, often for the first time. Today, however, the need has moved from simply promoting awareness of the Internet to developing the ability to harness its capacity.

Although many individual students, faculty, and researchers already use e-mail and the Web, truly robust



use of the Internet and, more significantly, the production of online content (databases, research results, and publications) has been extremely uneven. While some Latin American universities have enjoyed the resources and the leadership to invest in networks and train faculty and staff in their use, most universities, especially institutions servicing non-elite student populations and those outside of large capital cities, remain fundamentally unchanged by the "Information Revolution."

LASPAU's first step taken to address this concern was the 1998 Seminar on the Strategic Use of Information Technology by Environmental Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean (IT-Eco). Sponsored by the United States Information Agency and hosted and taught by staff members from LASPAU and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the seminar included both on-site and extended online components. The IT-Eco seminar brought

together 19 grantees from the Amazon Basin Scholarship Program and the Central American and Caribbean Ecology Program, two Fulbright ecology programs administered by LASPAU.

The nineteen Fulbright grantees arrived with an "end-user's" perspective of information technology (IT). However, they departed with a strategic and managerial understanding of how to harness IT to expand the reach of their home institutions and of how to use these resources more efficiently. They also gained a better understanding of how they, their institutions, and their societies will be impacted by the "Information Age." As one participant wrote to us: "I never realized the impact that IT can have on my everyday work—it [the workshop] *completely* related to my studies and professional work."

For more information:

<http://www.laspau.harvard.edu/aragon.htm>

<http://www.laspau.harvard.edu/IT-eco/contents.htm>

Winthrop Carty is Senior Development Officer for New Programs and Technology Initiatives at LASPAU. For those interested in sponsoring or collaborating in LASPAU's technology programs, please contact the author at: <winthrop_carty@harvard.edu>.

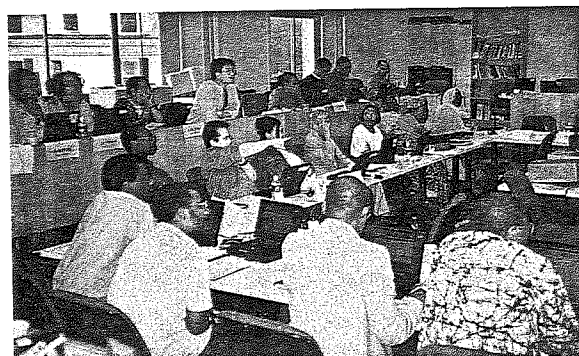
Policy Makers

Expanding Computer Prowess

BY CLAIRE BROWN

WHEN JEANETTE DUBOIS ARRIVED IN CAMBRIDGE from Grenada on a sunny day in June to attend a five-week workshop on education policy, little did she know that she would be embarking on the most intense relationship she would ever have with a portable computer. As Permanent Secretary of Education, Dubois had used computers in her work for several years. But with the technological revolution taking place throughout the world, she felt that she needed to find out about the state-of-the-art in her field, namely, how computers applications can be used in the policy and decision making processes of managing education systems. After five weeks of classroom discussions, demonstrations, exercises, and computer labs, she left with a deepened understanding as well as hands-on practice in how to use computers to enhance the knowledge base required to improve the education system in Grenada.

Every summer, Harvard Institute for International Development hosts the Educational Policy Analysis and Planning Workshop for education officials from developing countries, including Latin America. Participants have attended from over 40 countries. This workshop is geared to helping education officials learn to use empirical, objective, and timely information in the policy making arena with the objective of transforming static educational bureaucracies into active management enterprises. Many countries lack



Workshop participants learn computer applications in the classroom.

basic data about their education systems. Even fewer produce quality research about the issues that are encumbering the educational development of their countries. Therefore, the well-designed and well-managed use of computers can have an enormous impact in these settings.

In the technology component of the workshop, participants learn how to use spreadsheets, databases, and statistical packages to explore and answer questions about education issues. They build models of education systems to assess the impact of alternative policy choices. They also learn how to make effective presentations using presentation software packages. In addition, workshop participants spend time exploring the Internet. One thing that astounds many participants is the amount and quality of information about individual schools and school districts in the U.S. that is available on the Internet, and the fact that such information is available to the public and easily accessible. This has inspired a number of workshop participants to log on after they get back home and give



Johanna Damgaard Liander, Senior Preceptor in Romance Languages and Literatures comments on Internet use in classes.

"We no longer have the problem that a newspaper from Chile costs \$10 and that everyone in the class comes in with the same article," comments Johanna Liander, Senior Preceptor in Romance Languages and Literatures.

Specialized websites have made it easy for Spanish-language students to read newspapers and magazines from every Latin American country and Spain, as well as to virtually wander through the continent's museums and archives.

While first-year language students may use a bit of e-mail (and find that the system lacks the appropriate accents and tildes), "where the Web becomes crucial is the third year," according to Liander. Students are then able to discuss the press and other subjects in Spanish on a sophisticated level.

However, it's Liander's fourth-year students in her courses on Spanish film and on Mexican women and culture, who truly enjoy the Web's specialized sites. Class materials include interviews and other selections from the press, film, paintings, as well as literary and historical readings. Much can be found

on the Web: there's even a website dedicated to Adelita, heroine of the Mexican revolutionary song, who fought with Zapata's forces.

"Five years ago, it was very difficult," says Liander. "There were far fewer texts. You could get some journals at Widener, but it was difficult to get subscriptions. There were some basic studies about Saura and Bunuel. I used to go to Spain and collect every piece of information I could. Now there are websites like Cinespain, a monthly film magazine, that are more up to date than I could ever be, because I don't live in Spain."

But she adds a few words of caution: Web sources have to be checked and can be unreliable, such as a website claiming nonexistent Oscars for several Spanish films.

And while the Web ensures that language learning doesn't exist in a vacuum, it can't replace or displace books, she says.

"The Internet will change everything," she says. "It will reinforce the importance of learning language for the students, but it won't improve their subjunctive yet."

Many of the websites recommended by Johanna Liander can be found throughout DRCLAS NEWS and on our website <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>>.

demonstrations to their Education Ministers and other colleagues. A few have even used the Internet to keep in contact with schools they visited in the Boston area during the program, exchanging information and views with teachers and school principals here in the U.S.

But as much as the workshop promotes and provides instruction on computer applications, the director, Dr. Thomas Cassidy, emphasizes that computers are not a substitute for the thinking that is the backbone of education policy. "They are merely the tools that allow educators to collect, process and communicate information." With that in mind, the workshop instructors present frameworks for understanding education issues, policy interventions, and education reforms. Within those frameworks, instructors discuss and demonstrate the uses, and the strengths and weaknesses, of computer technology.

One example of an innovation in technology that Cassidy has applied to the education policy domain is the use of geographic information systems. Government officials from Namibia and Ghana have attended the workshop as part of on-going projects in their countries to develop geographic mapping systems with which to interface educational data. This technology has been used in Honduras and Paraguay, as well. Issues relevant to policy concerns, such as educational facilities, resources, student achievement, and teacher salaries can be displayed, singly or multiply, in visual map form. The maps can often be used to display information in ways that highlight issues that otherwise go unnoticed or seem insignificant to policy makers. Identifying hotbeds of problems, such as overcrowded or one-room schools, or concentrations of teachers without training or credentials, bring the reality of such situations to the fore in ways that lists of numbers, tables, and graphs cannot.

Former workshop participants tell us that the greatest impact the workshop has had on their subsequent work is that it allowed them to identify more clearly problems and issues within complex networks of education systems and strategies for dealing with these problems. Among them are:

- methods and strategies for improving teaching and learning
- new and decentralized structures for the delivery and management of education services
- the development of new systems of accountability
- alternative methods of financing education, the role of the private sector
- strategies for increasing participation in decision-making processes and strategies for linking education with the local and global needs of society.

Jeannette Dubois recently wrote us, "The interaction with the computer has really brought home more forcefully to me the need for greater use of information technology not only in education policy and planning but also in the development of our human resource capital in general. We have embarked on a \$6.5 million project to introduce computers, including the Internet and of course e-mail, into our secondary education and are seeking funding to embark on a similar project for primary education. Also, the use

of computers has been very helpful in the preparation of the budget. In fact, it has transformed our approach to budgetary and manpower planning. Finally, I have been able to update the model I had developed during the workshop, and I still discuss where we are and where we intend to go, using the model as the basis of that discussion."

Another workshop alumna, Youmna Al Ashkar, who works at a private international school in Lebanon, said that the workshop "taught her how important it is to have clear policies and how well policy makers need to communicate their decisions to staff in order to have effective implementation and the most efficient desired outcome." Her school has been working on integrating technology into their classrooms, curriculum and administration. She helped figure out how to raise the funds for the comprehensive Technology Plan for bringing technology into the school and sustaining it once it's there. In addition to the usual classroom uses, the school is providing free computer training to teachers, staff, and especially to parents. She suggests that educators interested in doing something similar can check their website at <www.jmrab.edu.lb>.

The workshop has had a number of participants from Latin America and the Caribbean throughout the years, but we would like to have many more.

For more information:

www.hiid.harvard.edu

Claire Brown is the Education Workshop Coordinator at HIID. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the program can log onto HIID's webpage, <www.hiid.harvard.edu>, or mail her at <cbrown@hiid.harvard.edu>.

UNIVERSITIES

<http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/>

Georgetown's Political Database of the Americas, great place for primary resources on Latin America

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/>

A fabulous website, recommended by the greatest number of Harvard faculty polled: well-indexed by country and subject, with access to a plethora of useful databases

<http://ladb.unm.edu/>

University of New Mexico's Latin America Data Base, good primary resources, excellent on economy, Central America, and teachers' resources

<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu>

The Latin American Survey Data Bank at the University of Connecticut's Roper Center for Public Opinion Research archives nearly one thousand studies from 16 countries, particularly Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela. Searchable



Latin American Governments Plug In

Is the World Wide Web a Goldmine for Researchers?

BY ANDRÉ LEROUX



Karen Stohert, a Pre-Columbian Studies Fellow at the Harvard-affiliated Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., recommends, "There is a very nice website sponsored by the Museo Antropológico del Banco Central del Ecuador and its Programa de Idiomas Vernaculares. "Great color pictures, interesting information—you can do a little ethnography from remote locations." The website, <<http://www.webnexus.com/users/vlp/hmpmus.htm>> also has many convenient links.

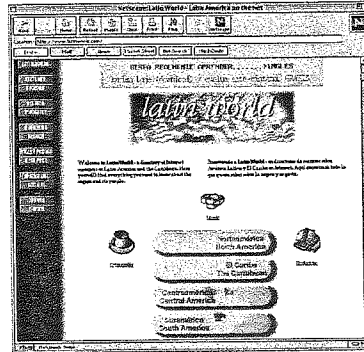
CONFUSED ABOUT WHERE TO GET info on the latest legislation in Mexico or presidential speech in Chile, aggregated census data in Colombia or a chronology of the peace commission in Guatemala? Perhaps you should try the Internet.

It may come as a surprise to some, but nearly every Latin American nation is now online, with government-sponsored sites on the World Wide Web having sprouted rapidly over the last few years. The "virtual" Argentine government, for example, is composed of at least 150 different webpages, diverse sites ranging from the Office of the President to the Ministry of Science and Technology, from the Congress to the census bureau, from the army to the foreign consulates. Nor are the pages limited to the slick and professionally-designed sites of the federal government. State and local governments also make use of the Internet, as witnessed by the webpages for the city of Córdoba and the provincial legislature of Tierra del Fuego.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

I've found in my own research that the depth and breadth of the offerings vary greatly from one country to the next, as does the quality of individual sites within a country. Mexico and Brazil exhibit the highest level of Internet sophistication and many of their sites are quite excellent by any standard, followed closely by Costa Rica and Colombia.

In general, however, one's expectations should be kept low, since most government agencies lack the personnel and resources required for maintaining informative, up-to-date sites. Most webpages are nothing more than electronic brochures for their agencies, including a few paragraphs of introductory text and a photograph or two. The sites often suffer from problems such as: links that



The best sites are often not the most obvious ones.

look interesting but lead to nowhere ("dead-ends"), pages that are "under construction", and already slow connections made almost unbearable by the heavy

use of graphics. It seems that most governments view their sites as relatively low priorities, with the emphasis on presenting an impressive image to the viewer, rather than creating an inventive tool for transparent and participatory government—though one finds surprising and significant exceptions.

A TAXONOMY OF WEBSITES

Perhaps the most high-profile group of websites is that for the office of the country's chief executive, typically the *presidencia*. Professional firms design and maintain such sites, making them attractive and bold,

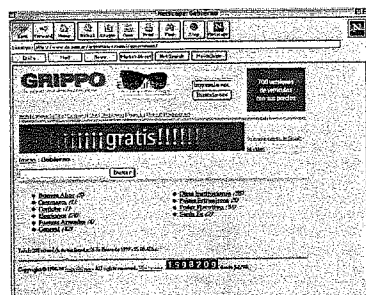
inviting visitors to learn more about the country and its leader. They almost always include a personal message from the executive, as well as a biography and photos. In addition, these sites often display links to other government entities, information on tourism, virtual trips to

palaces or capital cities, and general information about the geography, economy, and government of a country. I uniformly *dislike* these sites because of their bland nationalism and simplistic content (e.g. Chile, Argentina, Guatemala). They usually read like stump speeches or high school encyclopedia entries. I recommend you visit only if you are looking for good quotes on "the party line"; the best of these sites have the full text of presidential speeches and initiatives (Mexico is a good example).

Another major class of sites are those of the legislative branch, generally a congress. I have the unscientific impression that the best legislative websites are in those nations with institutions that depend to a lesser degree on the executive, or at least those in which a strong opposition force exists. In such cases, the congressional sites seem to be more aggressive about promoting the outward flow of information, with updates about ongoing activities, commissions, as well as the full text of proposed or approved legislation. Some provide links to congressional libraries. Check out sites in Mexico, Peru, and Chile for examples.

Regarding legal matters, most judiciaries do not have strong sites, but there are impressive exceptions, like the Supreme Courts of Mexico and Brazil. These offer search capabilities and the full text of laws, the constitution, and other documents, as well as background on the practice of jurisprudence.

Typically however, the best sites are not the most obvious ones. In those nations with a high level of web devel-



opment, cabinet-level ministries produce many of the best, information-packed sites. In Mexico, for example, the Secretary of the Environment offers considerable documentation that includes the full text of programs and policies, news, educational info, details and tips for regulatory compliance, even downloadable forms. The Secretary of Federal Receipts in Brazil contains forms and information for all aspects of federal tax payment, not to mention downloadable programs to help fill them out! Planning ministries, electoral commissions, and departments of external relations present good opportunities for productive research in the form of quotable programs, data, and policies. Look for an outstanding example of transparent government at the website of the National Development Plan in Costa Rica.

Perhaps the best type of site for social science researchers is that of the agency responsible for collecting geographic and statistical information. Depending on the country, it may take the form of the census bureau, statistical office, or a subdepartment of the planning ministry or even the electoral tribune (as in Costa Rica). Here you will find a considerable amount of quantitative data as well as a catalogue of publications. Some of these sites have truly enabled academic research to cross frontiers. A Mexican colleague of mine in this country gets "everything he needs" from the INEGI site to continue his research and writing, a situation which is

becoming more and more common.

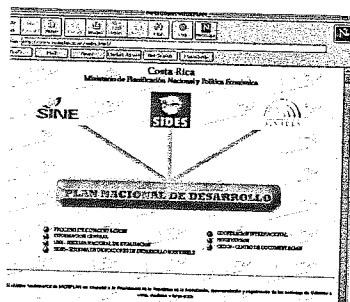
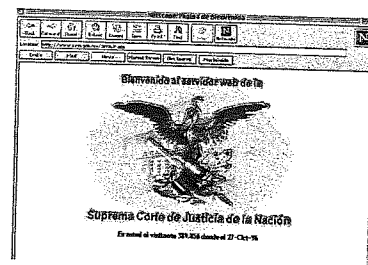
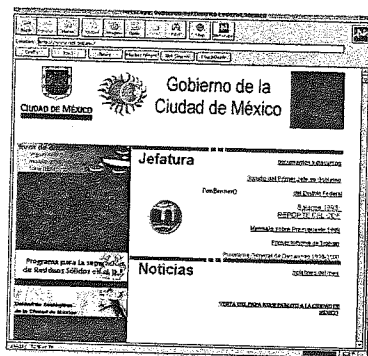
Finally, there are dozens of other government websites, most of which are the video equivalent of voice-mail and not worth the bother. A few of these sites offer narrowly useful information, such as the ministry of tourism, or the national agency that administers student

grants. State and municipal government sites are hit or miss, their excellence often depending on whether the party in power wants to be seen as an "innovator"—often the case with opposition parties. See the sites for Mexico City, Curitiba (Brazil), Quito (Ecuador), and Sucre (Bolivia) for examples. The government of Mexico City is especially interesting, as it invites public discussion and commentary on its proposals in an effort to increase its social base of support.

HITTING THE ROAD

The Internet can be an absorbing but time-consuming tool for research. Before starting, think about those government entities which relate directly to your work and make a short list. Most importantly, don't waste your time in countless frustrating net searches! I have provided a small list of useful and versatile links below. To find something not listed, try <latinworld.com>, which is a kind of "master-site", a phenomenal directory of all kinds of sites throughout Latin America. There you will find government links listed by country as well as countless informative pages sponsored by universities and NGOs, not to mention lists of links for music, culture, business, mass media, and on and on. But don't get lost. Try to limit your first efforts to an hour of directed exploration, which should give you a good idea about which government sites on your list have substantive information—keep an eye out for primary documents and downloadable files. Happy hunting!

André Leroux makes extensive use of the Internet to supplement his thesis research on Mexican environmental policy and remain informed about events across Latin America. He is the assistant to the director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.



WHERE TO FIND LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT SITES

www.latinworld.com (very useful global index)
www.brazil.gov.br (Brazil government site index)
www.gt (index of all sites with Guatemala domain)
www3.rcp.net.pe/index2.htm (Peru)
www.da.com.ar/argentina/espanol/government (index of Argentine government sites)

SOME OF THE SITES HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS ARTICLE:

www.semarnap.gob.mx (Secretary of the Environment in Mexico)
www.ddf.gob.mx (Government of Mexico City)

www.receita.fazenda.gov.br (Ministry of Federal Receipts in Brazil)
www.tge.go.cr (Electoral Tribune in Costa Rica)
www.mideplan.go.cr (National Development Plan in Costa Rica)
www.dnp.gov.co (National Department of Planning in Colombia)

VIRTUAL TOUR OF MEXICAN GOVERNMENT:

www.presidencia.gob.mx (Executive Office)
www.camara.diputados.gob.mx (House of Representatives)
www.senado.gob.mx (Senate)
www.scjn.gob.mx (Supreme Court)



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Linking Latin America

PHOTOGRAPHS AND ESSAY BY BEATRIZ TERRAZAS

AS A PHOTOJOURNALIST FOR THE *DALLAS MORNING NEWS*, I HAVE captured images of such seemingly disparate subjects as Mennonite immigrants to Mexico, Latina contestants for Selena stand-ins, the Pope in Cuba, and traditional Sunday serenatas. Sometimes, I feel that my camera is the only unifying theme among the graphics.

That is a fleeting feeling. The camera is my eye, and my eye, as a Latina woman, sees my subjects in relation to Latin America. The camera is a piece of technology, but it is my eye that links my subjects through my viewpoint and through my craft.

In the same way, the Internet links us all. It is technology, but we are the ones who face the challenge of using it to bring us closer together in an imaginative and productive way. A fellow photojournalist who spent the last three years working in Texas, covering Latino issues for a Mexican newspaper, regularly e-mailed her photo assignments across the borders.

In November, I met an Argentine photojournalist passing through Cambridge on business. We found we had a lot in common, and

exchanged e-mail addresses.

Today, with the keyboard on my computer and a telephone line, I can instantly send her my thoughts. It's less expensive than calling her, and the speed has no comparison at all with postal services. In a matter of seconds I can send her a photo and ask her opinion of it.

Reporters everywhere are using the Internet to do research for the stories they write. On a broader scale, a person in any country can, with a few keystrokes, log onto any newspaper in the world that is online, whether it's in the United States, Brazil or Argentina.

In a few years, could the people in these photos be linked by more than the common bond of living in a Latin American country, or of being of Latin American descent? I think so. The possibility for Latinos around the world to be a more cohesive group through the Internet is an exciting concept.

Beatriz Terrazas is a 12-year-veteran photojournalist who works for the Dallas Morning News. She is currently living in Cambridge while completing the Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University.



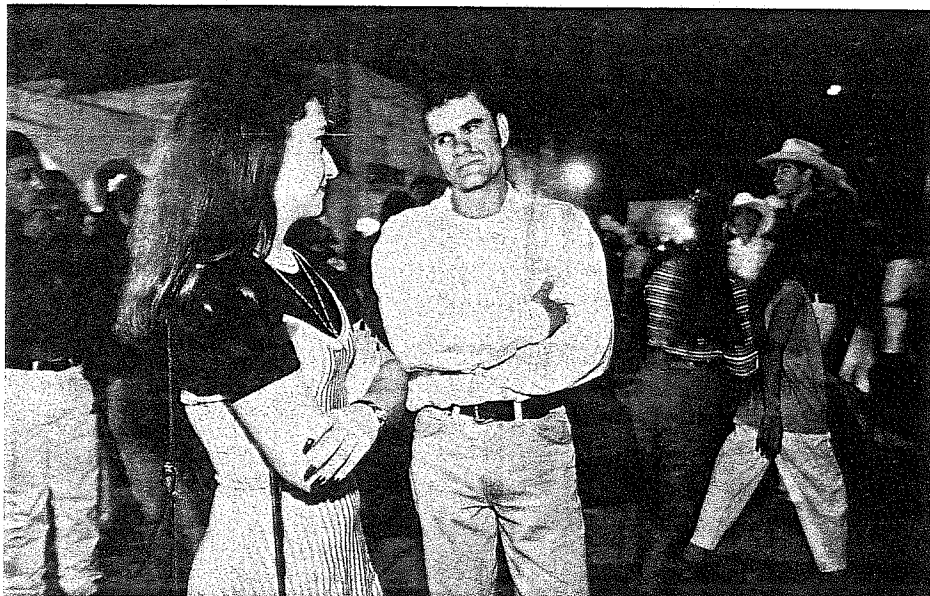
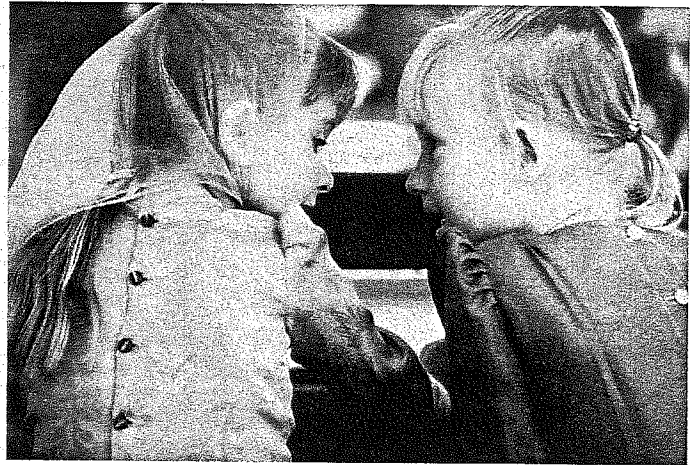
Other page: Two sisters in Mennonite community outside of Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, walk to school.

This page, top: Three Mennonite school girls watch as their schoolmates play.

Center left: A few of the girls who auditioned for the Selena movie in San Antonio, Texas, after the musical star's death, pose for a picture after their audition.

Center right: Two Mennonite girls whisper to each other during classes at school.

Bottom left: A young couple go through an awkward moment during a Sunday evening serenata in the small town of San Miguel el Alto, in Jalisco. Sunday serenatas are a long-held tradition that serves as a way for young people to meet and begin courtships. Typically, the girls walk around the plaza while the boys stand in groups and watch. The boys throw confetti on the girls who they are attracted to, and if they can get their courage up, the couples will begin to talk. Some eventually do begin relationships and get married.



Bottom right: An old man looks around for his family, whom he was separated from during a pilgrimage to San Juan de Los Lagos. During the weeks before Easter, many people make the pilgrimage to the San Juan de Los Lagos cathedral to pray to the saint for help or miracles in their lives.

HSPH Online Forum Reaches Women and Teens

Focus on Reproductive Health

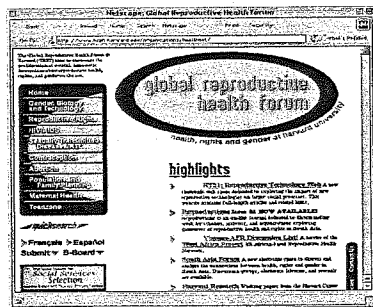
BY ANITA HARRIS

AN INNOVATIVE INTERNET INITIATIVE based at the Harvard School of Public Health is giving women in Latin America around the world access to critical information about their bodies and a voice in the global debate about reproductive health and rights.

The Global Reproductive Health Forum at <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet> supports a number of easy-to-access, interactive information services, including e-mail discussion groups, elec-

tronic journals, and online conferences.

In addition, GRHF provides a free gateway to an extensive archive of online information about: gender issues, reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, abortion, population and family planning issues, and maternal health.



tronic journals, and online conferences

The site is designed for use by non-governmental organizations, government officials, activists, academic researchers, and others interested in the field of reproductive health.

Unlike most online resources, GRHF specifically solicits participation by women, particularly from underserved populations and developing countries. The project is organizing new networks Latin America, South Asia, and West Africa, and GRHF staff is training women in these

regions to use Internet technology constructively.

"The capacity for women from developing countries to be active participants in the new electronic media is an important way to insure that their voices are heard and interests served in the debate about their health and bodies," says Orit Halpern, project manager of the GRHF. "The emerging electronic media, particularly the Internet, have become global forums in which the political, social, and economic dimensions of women's health are being debated and resolved."

Two research/project coordinators specialize in Latin America and Latino/as. Andrea Acevedo, a HSPH master of science student, has conducted research in the United States and in Mexico; her current interests concern HIV/AIDS in Latinos/as. Arachu Castro, a HSPH master of public health student, has done research over the past decade in reproductive health issues in Europe, Latin America, and among the Latino population in the United States.

With links to thousands of sites related to reproductive health on the World Wide Web, the GRHF enables users to quickly navigate the vast information resources of the Internet. The Forum staff monitors the site for accuracy and reliability and continually update all the information links.

Through the GRHF, users can access: in-depth discussions about contraceptive options for women, ethics discussion on HIV/AIDS treatment regimens for women in developing countries, human rights documents relating to women, listserves on reproductive health and rights, and TeenZone, a venue specifically designed for adolescents that provides information and links to other sites about health and sexuality.

HELPING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES USE THE INTERNET

One of GRHF's goals is to break down some barriers against the use of technology and extend the Internet's power to people in developing countries. In partnership with regional Internet service providers, GRHF helps women's organizations to get online and trains them to use the Internet effectively.

GRHF staff also are developing regional networks in Latin America, South Asia, and West Africa to facilitate the transfer of information and technology. In addition, GRHF provides its journals and other information services in an easy-to-access, email-based format.

GRHF's Searchable Library enables users to locate agencies working on reproductive health and population issues around the world and to quickly search the site's extensive network of links by subject or keyword.

The site is currently available in English and Spanish, with plans to expand the language base. The Global Reproductive Health Forum is based at the Harvard School of Public Health's Department of Population and International Health, under the leadership of Michael Reich, an expert on health policy-making in the developing world.

"Internet-based technologies have great potential to help people participate in the economy, get educated, and access information and services that are vital to their well-being," says Reich. "In doing so, they have a liberalizing and liberating impact on individuals, communities, and societies."

For more information:

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet>

Anita Harris is a freelance writer based in Cambridge.

PHOTO BY ANITA BACA



Fencing them out?
Information policy can
lead to sustainable
economic growth.

The Global Internet

Privacy, Security, and Civil Liberties

BY DEBORAH HURLEY

In Nicaragua, Julie Noble, a U.S. relief worker, was expelled because of an e-mail message she sent criticizing President Arnoldo Alemán's handling of aid for victims of Hurricane Mitch.

In Venezuela, campaign opponents were accused of inappropriately using the Internet and e-mail in Hugo Chávez' recent successful presidential bid.

Such incidents throughout Latin America and the world put the spotlight on the Internet and issues of security, privacy, and civil liberties. —JCE

THE ISSUES OF PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SECURITY ARE often treated as new ones, but the development of measures for the protection of personal data and privacy and the security of information systems are more than two decades old. A lot of work has already been done at international and national levels to establish common principles and rules.

The current challenges are the dissemination of the international and national frameworks that already exist. New measures and practices may be developed as neces-

sary to meet security and privacy requirements.

There is a deep human need to communicate. It is a profound characteristic of our species. We will go to great efforts to do so, from making clay tablets and digging cuneiform into them, repeatedly dipping a quill into ink and scratching it on parchment, to the age of computer technologies and beyond.

For most of mankind's existence, communication was, of necessity, evanescent. Now, and into the future, as more and more interactions take place over various information media, a greater proportion of communications are, and will be, recorded and recordable. They will be more durable and much easier to duplicate and distribute than ever before. The Global Information Infrastructure is a tool for our communication with one another. It is important to bear this in mind and develop human-centered systems and policies for the Global Information Society.

Coupled with our zeal to communicate is the equally strong desire, at times, to limit the audience for our conversation. Conversations with a spouse, with a boss about

CUBA, BRAZIL, AND MEXICO: A SAMPLING



<http://ladb.unm.edu/sourcemex/mexlinks.html>
links to economic news and information about Mexico,
full-text economic publications

<http://www.curitiba.arauc.br/>
This interesting trilingual (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) site from Curitiba, Brazil, is a treasure to anyone interested in urban advocacy and environmental issues

<http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~pklee/Cuba/>
A very thorough guide to articles, databases, original sources, everything and anything to do with Cuba

<http://www.escapeartist.com/cub/cuba.htm>
This website on Cuba is not as thorough as the one mentioned above, but is more representative of Cuban viewpoints on and off the island

a new company strategy, with a co-worker about a boss, or with a colleague about some government policy are all fine communications, with nothing inherently wrong or embarrassing about them. At the same time, we do not want everyone to hear them.

Information technologies provide many potential benefits, but it is important also to ensure that communications systems are not made too transparent and to preserve zones that permit individuals to engage in all the great variety of human discourse. The current, vivid debates about privacy and personal data protection and cryptography arise from this problem.

While there is a lot of good news with regard to information and communication technologies—general improvements in terms of speed, cost and other factors, and their potential economic and social benefits—there is also some

bad news. Intrinsic security is growing worse. There are more computers, more networks, more data and information, and, most significantly, more fallible human beings connected to and using the systems.

Two equally strong, diverging trends may be discerned in the present debate. They are increasing treatment of personal data as property and growing consideration of protection of privacy and personal data as a fundamental human right. Under the property analysis, the personal data becomes commoditized. The individual claims the value of their personal data and bargains for remuneration in return for its use or disclosure.

In treating privacy and personal data protection as fundamental human rights, they are categorized as inalienable, in the same manner that the right to vote may not be traded or organs may not be sold. The operative notion is that personal information is so intimately bound up with individual integrity and autonomy that it should not be permissible to bargain it away.

Neither of these trends has prevailed, and the debate is still heating up. I favor the human rights view of privacy and personal data protection for the Global Information Infrastructure.

The underlying issue for privacy and security is: "Who gets to speak and decide on these issues?"

We already know a lot about security and privacy, but are not implementing it sufficiently. We need to work toward a global consensus with regard to business practices, law, norms, and regimes for security of information systems, privacy, and personal data protection.

Deborah Hurley is the Director of the Harvard Information Infrastructure Program. She worked for many years in Paris for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on issues of privacy, cryptography, security of information systems, and intellectual property protection.

THE HARVARD INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

The Harvard Information Infrastructure Project (HIIP), established in 1989, works with government, industry, and academia to address a wide range of policy issues relating to information infrastructure, its development, use, and growth.

Throughout the year on Mondays, the HIIP holds an ongoing Seminar on Information Technology and Public Policy, many of them with special relevance for Latin America. For instance, this month, Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Center for International Development (CID) at Harvard University, discusses a new project on Development in the Information Age, which examines the interplay between information technology and sustainable economic growth, and the stability of international financial systems for developing countries. CID, established earlier this year by the Harvard Institute for International Development and the Kennedy School of Government, is a University-wide

research center for sustainable international development.

Other HIIP seminars have focused on such widespread and cross-disciplinary issues as "Democracy in the 21st Century: Some New Possibilities Created by the Net," "Under the Radar: Capital Formation on the Net," and "Electronic Security Problems and Cryptographic Solutions for Human Rights Organizations." (For this semester's seminar calendar, see <www.ksg.harvard.edu/iip>.)

Speakers and the audience of seminar participants come from a variety of disciplines, from academia, government, and the private sector, including members of the Boston business community. They are united by their common interest in the leading edge information and communication policy issues of the day.

For more information:

www.ksg.harvard.edu/iip

Bringing The Net To The Masses

Cybercafes in Latin America

BY MADANMOHAN RAO

FROM THE INTERNIK CYBERCAFE IN Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the Internet Link Club in Andheri, India, Internet cafe-based access centers have been springing up across the world. The leading Internet cafe resources online—the Cybercafe Search Engine (<<http://cybercaptive.com/>>) and the InternetCafe Guide (<<http://www.net-cafeguide.com>>) list about 2,000 cybercafes in 110 countries, quite a few in Latin America.

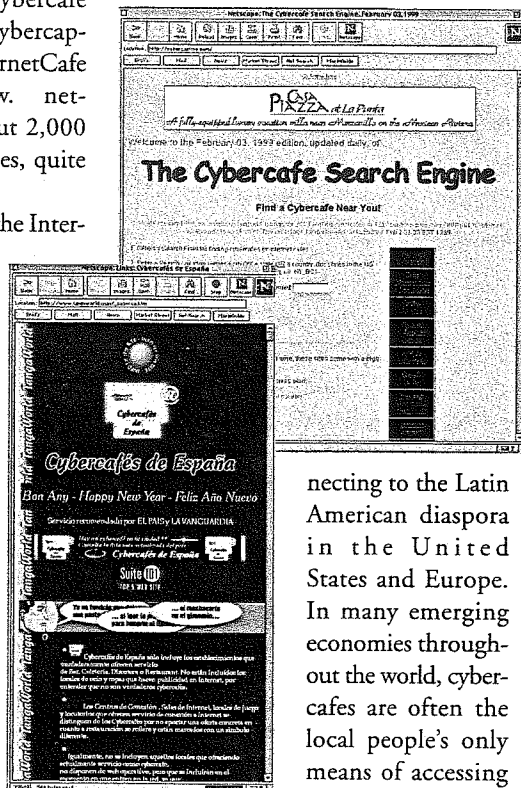
Much of the success of the Internet as an information economy and as a new medium depends on affordable, near-universal access to the Net in countries across the globe. In emerging economies, numerous projects have been launched in this regard incorporating public Internet kiosks, cybercafes, community access centers, and multimedia communication booths.

Numerous studies, like the Harvard Information Infrastructure Project's *Public Access to the Internet* (edited by Brian Kahin and James Keller), focus on government initiatives for providing widespread Internet access to the general public. Another approach draws on entrepreneur-driven initiatives, such as the cybercafes in Latin America.

For instance, WorldTel chairman Sam Pitroda recently signed a high-profile agreement worth \$50 million with the Tamil Nadu government in India, to set up 1,000 Internet community centers with up to 20 terminals each, thus providing widespread Internet access as well as employment for up to 50,000 people. WorldTel first experimented with such concepts

in Latin America, in countries like Peru and Mexico.

In many Latin American countries, cybercafes are becoming a key part of the tourism and Web solutions industries, as well as a way of con-



necting to the Latin American diaspora in the United States and Europe. In many emerging economies throughout the world, cybercafes are often the local people's only means of accessing the Internet.

The streets between Avenida Amazonas and Juan Leon Meron in Quito, Ecuador—home to many tourist hotels and restaurants—also host an astonishing density of Internet cafes: almost a dozen in an area of just a few blocks.

Many of these Internet cafes—offering a mix of Internet access, coffee, snacks and even a book exchange—are less than three months old, such as the Interactive Cafe on Fosch Street.

"We have seen almost 12,000 customers since we opened three months ago. About 90 % of the Internet users are foreign tourists, the rest are local Ecuadorans," says Paul Konz, manager of Interactive Cafe.

The Cafe has 14 computers connected to the Net via a leased line which costs US\$1,500 a month. "We hope to have as many as 20 computers next year," says Konz. He hopes to break even by the end of next year, a projected window also shared by the owners of some of the other Internet cafes, like Aaron Stern, proprietor of the PapayaNet cybercafe.

"We get up to 300 people a day, about 25% of whom are locals," claims Stern. PapayaNet's services are advertised in local newspapers, tourism brochures, and at the airport in Quito.

"In addition to free mail services like Hotmail, our customers are heavy users of IDT's popular Net2Phone service," says Stern.

The Internet telephony service in Ecuador can help cut costs of calling Europe from an average of two dollars a minute down to about 30 cents a minute. Unfortunately, this may not be a feasible offering in countries like India, where Internet telephony is banned.

Charges for Internet access in the cybercafes of Quito vary from 15,000 sucres to 20,000 sucres an hour (1USD = 6,750 sucres).

However, stiff competition from neighboring cybercafes is forcing some of them to expand their services into franchised operations in other cities in Ecuador as well as other countries in Latin America; some are even beginning to offer Web solutions like website design and hosting.

Stern plans to extend his PapayaNet chain to Peru and Colombia. Oscar Imbaquingo, proprietor of InternetCafe, plans to set up cybercafes in the Ecuadorian cities of Cuenca and Guayaquil. He has just begun setting up websites for local companies, and has about 12 clients—most of them tourist agencies.

Web solutions are also an integral part of the business model for Internet company AltesaNet <www.altesa.net>, which runs a cybercafe called Monkey. "We get a steady stream of tourists and locals to the cybercafe, but our real target is the e-commerce market in Ecuador," says Rene Crespo, president of AltesaNet.

The company has designed and hosted websites for over 70 clients in Quito, and also manages the on-line promotion for events like a local beauty pageant. The cybercafe is used to demonstrate Web marketing techniques for prospective clients, and to conduct training classes. The cafe was also publicized at the recent Compu'98 national PC Expo in Quito.

Other Internet cafes in the neighborhood—like PlanetaNet—offer membership programs with discounted fees for regular Internet users. "We also offer 10 to 15% discounts for high school students. We may even open an art gallery to attract tourists," says Galo Fierro, proprietor of PlanetaNet.

Given the dependence of the Ecuadorian economy on tourism, it seems clear that cybercafes are going to play an important role in the tourism segment—both for visiting tourists trying to communicate back home as well as tourism agencies hoping to learn more about the interests and preferences of tourists.

In contrast, just across the border in Colombia, cybercafes have not been doing so well in cities like Bogotá. "The high costs of leased lines—U.S.

\$2,500 for a 64 Kbps connection—have not made it easy for cybercafes to flourish. Many have now closed shop," says Christian Boehlke, business director for Web solutions company Axesnet <www.axesnet.com>. Further up north in San José, Costa Rica, Internet access centers are faring much better. A steady stream of Internet users visits the numerous photocopy shops doubling as Internet access centers, such as Internet Point near the University of Costa Rica. The handful of thriving cybercafes includes the InternetCafe with 50 computers, and the

more modest CyberCafe, near Teatro Nacional, with 10 PCs. "We charge about \$4 an hour for Net access, and get about 50 people a day. We offer Web training sessions for local businesses for \$15 an hour, and also publish websites," says Roger Pilón, CyberCafe proprietor. His company has published tourism-oriented sites for local car rental services <www.carentals.com> and real estate companies <www.goisthmus.com>.

But what really sets his operation apart from the others is the ambitious search engine and directory service <www.searchcostarica.com> he has launched for Costa Rican websites. The service is currently in English, and will be expanded to include Spanish content. "These new services are bound to increase traffic to my search site as well as to my CyberCafe," Pilón says. The CyberCafe is being promoted in local media and in tourism fairs in Europe. Ernesto Rivera, an Internet columnist at *La República*, is optimistic about the prospects for cybercafes in Latin America. "Many of them offer good, cheap access to the Internet, and nurture local communities of Internet enthusiasts. The Net is very much in vogue among students, foreigners, businessmen and tourists—and entrepreneurs with vision and luck are bound to succeed with cybercafe ventures," he concluded.

"Our real target
is the
e-commerce
market"

—René Crespo
president, AltesaNet,
Ecuador

MUSEUMS

<http://www.museuvirtual.com.br/english.html>

The Virtual Museum of Brazilian Art hosts the official websites of Brazil's most important contemporary artists. The project aims to exhibit a representative collection to be organized by historical periods, creating a center for Brazilian art in the Internet.

<http://www.webnexus.com/users/vlp/hmpmus.htm>

This website sponsored by the Museo Antropologico del Banco Central del Ecuador and its Programa de Idiomas Vernaculares offers "Great color pictures and interesting information."

<http://www.diarioelpais.com/muva/>

A Virtual Museum, sponsored by Uruguay's El Pais newspaper and featuring the country's best artists. A truly imaginative and well-designed bilingual website, which is also an architectural treat. The best of the "virtual" museums

<http://www.modotti.com>

A visually beautiful and informative site devoted to photographer Tina Modotti

<http://diegorivera.com/>

A virtual and bilingual museum of Diego Rivera's work



For more information:

<http://cybercaptive.com>

<http://netcafeguide.com>

Madanmohan Rao <madanr@planetasia.com>, reported on the Internet cafe scene while on tour in Colombia, Costa Rica, and Ecuador. Rao is Principal Consultant at a Bangalore-based Web solutions company Planetasia.com and a contributing editor for the Internet Society's magazine "On The Internet." He was a speaker at the Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility's "One Planet, One Net: The Public Interest in Internet Governance," an International Symposium at MIT in October, co-sponsored by the Harvard Information Infrastructure Project.

The Public Face of Cyberspace

The Internet as a Public Good

BY DEBORA L. SPAR

IMAGINE A NETWORK THAT SPANS the world. A network that delivers—invisibly and inexpensively—the myriad bits of information that will undeniably be the key to prosperity in the 21st century. Imagine a network that links patients in rural areas of Latin America with doctors in the cities or even in foreign medical centers. Imagine a network linking poor students in Central America's tiny mountain hamlets with trained teachers, and connecting farflung businesses with customers wherever they might exist. This network, of course, is the Internet.

In these scenarios and many others, the Internet acts as a virtual and virtuous public good. It incorporates the activities of all who wish to use it. It allows these users to interact without any rivalry in their usage. And it serves the greater good of the community in which it exists, easing information flows and creating layers of positive externalities. But does this world really exist? Can it deliver the lofty ideals that its adherents predict? In 1998, it is not quite clear. The Internet's potential is obvious, but its capacity to function as a public good is not. Particularly in the developing world, the promise of a networked society may be more hopeful than real.

With cyberspace developing at breakneck speed, it is impossible to predict trends with any certainty. Yet it is also important to think about how countries, and particularly developing countries, will deal with this technical and sociological development. Should cyberspace be considered a public good, subject to government policy and regulation? What policy-making forum is most appropriate for this vast new territory? And how will rules of any sort be imposed on the

unruly reaches of the Net?

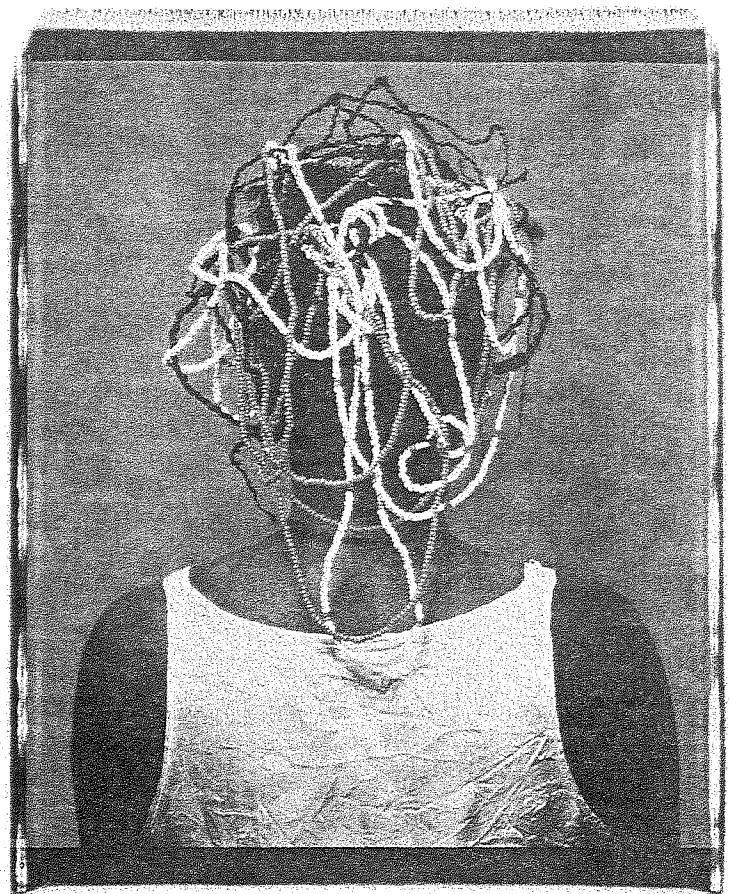
By 1998 the Internet could truly be seen as a global medium—even, perhaps, as *the* global medium. Its connections crossed borders imperceptibly, linking markets and citizens in new and intriguing ways and destroying conventional notions of national borders. Continuing a trend made possible by phones and faxes and satellite dishes, the Internet promised to make information readily available to all corners of the globe. Cheaply, and without technological hassle, it promised to deliver to users whatever information they could find—and to link the purveyors of information to their potential consumers with a speed and an ease that had never before been realized. In the process, it also threatened to destroy many of the more conventional aspects of business, society and the state.

Both the promise and the threat rested on the basic power of information. By moving information so widely and freely, the Internet could remove the informational barriers that authoritarian states had long wielded over their citizenry. It could also put producers directly in touch with their would-be customers, dismantling the cumbersome chains of wholesalers, distributors and retailers that have customarily separated producers from their sales and added significantly to final product costs. In both the commercial and political spheres, therefore, the radical promise of the Internet was to dismantle existing chains of authority, giving citizens and consumers greater autonomy over their

own decisions and—more poetically—their own fate.

Without the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult to evaluate the credibility of any of these promises, since their delivery rests so critically on the passage of time and the interplay of countless unpredictable factors. Yet thinking of these predictions in the context of public goods is an interesting (if perhaps non-obvious) point of departure.

Public goods, after all, are essentially a way of conceiving economic activity that falls somewhere between the state and the market. Discussion of public goods implies a concern for the societal impact of commercial activity or for the provision of social goods outside of normal commercial channels. All these attributes and all these issues exist in cyberspace. Indeed, many of the more radical promises put forth by the Internet's most devoted proponents relate to the shifting boundary between private and public sectors, and to the provision of social goods by commercial forces.



MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS

"Los Caminos," 1996, from the "When I'm Not Here, Estoy Alla..." series by Magdalena Campos-Pons, a Jamaica Plain artist. The Cuban-born artist is a former Bunting Institute Fellow at Radcliffe.

THE CASE FOR THE INTERNET AS A PUBLIC GOOD

The definition of a public good is no easy matter. The two most-often cited attributes of public goods is that they are nonexcludable and their consumption nonrivalrous. Both of these attributes can be seen to apply to the Internet. Theoretically, any number of users can simultaneously interact in cyberspace. By ratcheting up the necessary physical infrastructure—adding servers, increasing telephone lines, building additional satellite capacity—new users can simply piggyback onto the existing system: it is almost infinitely expandable.

The parallel here to road-based highway systems is apt. Once the main structure has been constructed—the United States' interstate sys-

tem or Germany's autobahn for the original highway; the NSF-supported backbone for this new Information Highway—new systems can be attached to this structure without tremendous difficulty. Local communities can build connecting roads to the interstate system; new users can access the Net through modems and phone lines. Unlike the older highway systems, though, this one is global. Users in, say, Colombia, can connect directly to Yahoo! or Microsoft Network. Their links to these U.S.-based services, moreover, do not come at the expense of existing connections within the United States. Instead, the Colombian users are simply added into the system, expanding the network rather than constraining it.

It is this attribute of cyberspace that

puts it, theoretically at least, into the category of public goods. So long as the Colombian user can gain access to a phone line, a computer, and a modem, he or she cannot easily be denied access to the Internet's underlying architecture. The highway is there, it is open, and anyone with a direct connection can venture upon it. More formally, the use of the Internet's myriad pathways is thus nonexcludable. Likewise, its usage is also non-rivalrous, since the entry of the Colombians does not force any other users off-line. To the contrary, one of the Internet's most-touted features is its very ability to bring together expanding communities of like-minded users. So the addition of the Colombia users to, say, a chat room on development in the Andes would

Viewpoint From Cuba

By Haroldo Dilla



I've been using e-mail for more than a decade, and frankly, I don't see how I ever lived without it. It allows me to engage in discussions with my academic colleagues, as well as keep up with friends. It's quite low cost compared to telephone and fax, and that's important for us "poor folk." As I become more involved in the international academic network, e-mail is increasingly important to me.

The Internet is another story. There is no free access to the Internet in Cuba. The Cuban government gives several reasons for these limitations. The first (in order of priority) is the cost. Etcetera, a Cuban company, offers Internet service to a few authorized Cuban institutions and some individuals such as resident foreigners. However, even without restrictions, the monthly cost of the connection, some \$60 U.S. monthly, would be prohibitive for any Cuban professor or researcher and the majority of the social science institutions for which they work. Government officials have argued that the cost of extending the service is very expensive.

The Cuban government also contends that unrestricted Internet access would result in a proliferation of undesired material, ranging from political messages from groups in Miami to ethically questionable content such as pornography, that would be detrimental to the Cuban people.

These two arguments are not irrelevant. The Internet is not a democratic space as its apologists are wont to describe it, but a space in which those who have the most power have the most presence. In relation to Cuba, this is true. Exploring the Internet on trips outside of Cuba, I've been struck by the abundance of "news" from so-called independent journalists who describe alleged incidents occurring in my Havana neighborhood that none of my busybody neighbors ever heard about. And I might

add that my neighbors hear about most everything.

But I think it is an ineffective policy to impose Internet restrictions beyond the short term. It is not possible to seal off the Internet behind a Great Wall of China. Quite clearly, there is no choice but to join the fray of the battle within the Internet. The cost of remaining isolated from the Internet is very high. Together with its mix of pornography, political dogma, and other inopportune trash, the Internet circulates extremely valuable news and scientific information that can one can only ignore by paying the price of lagging behind intellectually.

This academic backwardness is the greatest threat posed by the current restrictions. My sporadic experience with the Internet at universities abroad has shown me the impressive ability of the Internet to provide access to bibliographic resources, magazines and newspaper archives, and other resources, despite the fact that I've never become a "passionate" user.

Perhaps because they are aware of the dangers of lagging behind, the Cuban authorities have modified their initial stance. Some research centers with great technological and economic importance have been given their own access to the Internet. In other social science research institutions, a system of regulated access now allows researchers to make individual requests based on their specific projects for access from a central terminal.

In any case, let me make one observation about another danger of the Internet: addiction. The Internet is like strychnine: a little bit is medicinal, but a lot poisons you. You can be left without time or energy for other things. And I'm sort of an old-fashioned investigator; I still feel no greater pleasure than reading a good book.

Haroldo Dilla is Professor of History and Philosophy at the University of Havana and a staff researcher at the Institute of Philosophy. He was a short-term DRCLAS Research Associate last year.

presumably increase the value of the chat room to its existing users.

Cyberspace also has the capacity—perhaps even the natural inclination—to foster positive externalities, such as long-distance medical treatment. Expert doctors could “consult” in remote areas, reviewing patients they will never meet, conducting training for local health providers, even “assisting” through video links with operations or emergency procedures. The result would be better healthcare, at lower cost, for the local community and others. Tele-education could likewise link students and teachers over what would otherwise be improbable distances, once again bringing high-quality services at very low cost.

Even at a purely commercial level, the Internet promises to create positive externalities, particularly in the realm of economic development. With access to the Net, small producers in remote locations can gain exposure in, and thus access to, wider markets. Rather than having to link themselves to intermediaries and retail distributors, producers can advertise their wares directly on the Net, attracting the kind of consumers most likely to purchase a particular product. If such online sales spur significant commerce—and online sales in general are predicted to grow to anywhere between \$6 billion and \$130 billion by the year

2000—they should act to spur economic growth and its accompanying benefits wherever they occur.

Yet the tremendous possibilities of cyberspace must not blind governments or their citizens to the costs that are likely to accompany the growth of this new territory.

Governments that want to reap the tremendous potential of cyberspace in tele-medicine and tele-education, for example, will have to expend considerable resources to do so—or else find some means of harnessing the private sector to service the public good. Citizen concern about privacy issues and children’s access to pornography or particular political or religious views will undoubtedly manifest themselves in public debate, and eventually in public policy. Governments will need to find some means of squashing the transfer of “bad” information without restricting the flow of “good”.

Moreover, the fundamentally international nature of cyberspace dictates that any Internet policy will need to be multilateral, spanning all countries in which the relevant activity occurs. Global coalitions will need to be created and global consensus arrived at—even though the Internet is still in its infancy and countries vary widely in their use and familiarity with it. Developing countries in many ways have the greatest stake in the orderly and open

development of the Internet. They cannot afford to have information in cyberspace restricted entirely to private enclaves or to have this flow of information slowed by a priority system that works against poorer users. They also need desperately to create the physical infrastructure that will bring the Internet to the doorsteps and desktops of their citizens. These developing countries, such as those in Latin America, risk exclusion from a policy that will in all likelihood be global in scope.

Latin American and other developing nations need to recognize the importance of building negotiating links not just with other nations, but also with the private groups that are increasingly helping to shape the rules of cyberspace.

Conceiving of the Internet as a public good helps at least to point policymakers in an appropriate direction. The Net is undeniably a boon for private business and a revolution in communications. It is also, though, a powerful medium capable of delivering—or restricting—significant societal benefits. Thinking of it in this way, and probing policy options along these lines, are the first steps towards harnessing this tremendous power.

Debora Spar is an Associate Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School.

This article was adapted from Debora Spar’s chapter, “The Public Face of Cyberspace: The Internet as a Public Good,” in *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*, Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg, and Marc A. Stern, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, available late March, 1999. Funding for the chapter was provided by the United Nations Development Program.

Internet Commerce

Making it available for “The Rest of Us”

BY JAMES S. HENRY

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT DOING BUSINESS OVER THE Internet, you usually think about large enterprises like the popular online bookstore <www.amazon.com>, located in First World countries, with First World resources. However, despite obstacles, a “grassroots organization” approach to e-commerce may serve as a viable model in Latin America and elsewhere.

The rise of the Internet may serve to help developing and newly industrialized countries expand their share of world trade, which most observers agree is crucial to their development. These countries might be able to piggyback on e-commerce technologies developed for First World

markets, in order to break down traditional barriers like the high costs of design, distribution, marketing, and sales support, and use them to reach First World customers and investors.

Some developing countries may also be able to use the Internet to grab a larger share of the global computer software, hardware and services industry, taking advantage of the opportunity that Internet technology itself affords to decentralize operations and share know-how and management across borders. Better information about First World goods and services should help them design better products, and reduce transactions costs.



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'98, is the founder
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Latino Community
Technology and
Communication
Careers for Latinos,
both dedicated to
bringing
technology literacy
to Latinos in the
United States and
elsewhere. His
masters' project
was to create a
simple website to
make it easy for
nonprofits to build
infrastructure
serving the
community and to
provide models to
train executive
directors how to
use Internet for

However, this kind of "unmixed blessing" result is far from guaranteed. For Internet privatization and the rise of global e-commerce and finance also poses several serious problems to developing countries—problems that are unlikely to be solved by private profit-seeking alone.

INFRASTRUCTURE BARRIERS

To begin with, many developing countries are finding that their existing telephone and computer networks are not adequate to support the mass deployment of quality Internet services, and that it is costly to upgrade their computers, higher speed wide-area "backbone" networks, and local access. In a period when "submerging markets" from Thailand and Indonesia to Korea, Russia and Brazil are experiencing profound economic crises, this kind of investment is often viewed as a luxury. This could cause them to slip farther behind. This is a cruel dilemma—just as the Internet revolution is arriving to permit increased global trade and openness, many of the key potential beneficiaries have been too smitten by other global economic forces to take advantage of it.

GOVERNMENT BARRIERS

A second challenge is posed by the fact that the widespread deployment of Internet services is viewed as a threat by government agencies in many developing countries, partly because the Internet provides a conduit for free speech and political opposition. However, governments also fear that online commerce may directly undermine government revenues and regulations in many other ways.

For example, in many countries, state-owned local telephone companies have tended to price long-distance and data communications services very high, as a kind of "luxury tax" on these services. The widespread use of the Internet for, say, international faxes or telephony will undermine these revenue sources.

Furthermore, many developing and newly industrialized countries governments also derive a large fraction of their revenues from value-added, customs, and sales taxes, and thus are unlikely to accept proposals not to tax Web commerce.

TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY BARRIERS

The Internet, computer, and information services industries as a whole remain highly concentrated in a handful of First World countries, notwithstanding "decentralization" opportunities. Evidence to date suggests that these industries are subject to strong "network economies" and increasing returns. This is fancy economist jargon for the painful reality that winners tend to grow while losers fall even farther behind. Requisite skills are often concentrated in "seedbeds" like Silicon Valley and Route 128, and leading-edge customers also tend to be located in First World countries. Left to the free market's own devices, the rise of the global Internet industry may only serve to widen the gap between rich and poor countries, and between rich and poor people within countries.

LOCAL SKILLS AND ORGANIZATION

The Internet's potential for global electronic commerce requires much on-the-ground education and training. The actual technical requirements for, say, rounding up digital pictures from a Guatemalan fabric cooperative and publishing them in an online catalogue are actually pretty trivial, compared with the "social costs" of training the cooperative to use computers and digital cameras, understand how they should approach First World customers, and meet the quality and delivery standards of such customers.

These barriers are formidable, especially the last one. But, as usual, something can be done if we concentrate on the "half full" aspect of the situation. One grassroots organization that I have recently been involved with, <www. PEOPLink.org>, provides an excellent example of just how much can be accomplished with a little bit of funding and a great deal of commitment and focus. PEOPLink, a non-profit Internet commerce venture that focuses on using the Internet to connect producer groups in developing countries with First World markets, was created in 1995 by Daniel Salcedo, a long-time community organizer in Central America and the U.S., with less than \$500,000 of assistance from the MacArthur Foundation and the InfoDev group at the World Bank. Its goal is to help bring the powers of Internet commerce to the task of leveling the global trade playing field for poor artisans around the world. Toward that end, it has focused on

THE OTHER HALF

The last year has witnessed a veritable Internet "tulip craze" in First World countries, with soaring stock prices for companies like AOL and eBay, the rapid takeoff of new electronic services like online catalogues, auctions, and brokerages, and the prospect that "e-commerce" may soon exceed \$300 billion a year. Right now, more wealth is being created by the information and network computing revolutions than by any other undertaking in human history. In this context it is easy for "we happy few" First Worlders to overlook the fact that from a global perspective the Internet is still very much an elite phenomenon—it is almost irrelevant to the daily lives of all but the top tier of the global

income distribution.

True, there are now more than 150 million Internet users around the globe, and as of December 1998, at least 212 countries had Internet connections. But most of the Internet's heaviest users, technology suppliers, service providers, and investors remain concentrated in just a handful of First World countries. Indeed, the U.S. alone—with 5% of the world's population and a fifth of its income—accounts for nearly half of all Internet users, over 60% of Web servers, and an even higher share of sophisticated new e-commerce services. The top 10% of the world's 5.9 billion people, in only 23 countries, account for nearly three quar-

creating a global network of artisans that uses Internet commerce to improve their terms of trade.

PEOPLink's mission has special relevance for development because such artisans are usually drawn from the very poorest sectors of society. Most of them are women who live in remote rural settings, usually earning just a dollar or two a day. They use local materials to create products that are often a source of great pride and ethnic identity. Traditionally they were only able to market these products internationally as the first link at the end of a long chain of intermediaries who wound up paying them 10 cents on the retail dollar. Not surprisingly, many of them ended up migrating from their villages to capital cities to become car washers, waitresses, or worse. Along the way, of course, the fact that their work products changed hands so many times in the course of getting to market also made it impossible for them to take any credit for their work, brand it, or provide their customers with information about who created it and why.

PEOPLink has been working to change all this with the help of Internet technology and a great deal of organizing in the countries themselves. It has focused on developing "Trading Partners" in each country where it operates. Each of these organizations, in turn, represents thousands of local artisans. Currently there are Trading Partners in 14 countries, with 16 more expected to join this year. Each one gets a standard "toolkit" of digital and computer equipment, software and training procedures, permitting them to participate *directly* in Internet commerce, right from their home countries, without any intermediaries at all.

The toolkit fits in a backpack and costs about \$2,500. The training required to set up the connections has been designed for people with only a basic high school education and "no fear" when it comes to computers. Most of the training is also available online at <www.peoplink.org/> training, and is supported by e-mail-based counselors. Each Trading Partner develops the whole gamut of skills that are essential for Web marketing, beginning with simple computer e-mails and the use of digital cameras. In just a few months, they are able to prepare their own simple webpages and upload them directly to their portion of the PEOPLink website, where their information is assembled into catalogues geared to both wholesale and

retail distribution. (See <<http://www.peoplink.org/idiky>> for the Kuna link from Panamá, for example.)

Overall, this "grassroots organization" approach to e-commerce appears to be working very well—at last count, more than 300 products are being offered by Trading Partners at the PEOPLink site, and sales are taking off. The sales model benefits Trading Partners by paying them their normal prices plus half of the gross profit from not using intermediaries. Customers also are enriched by the amazing variety of new goods they can find, and by access to an abundance of cultural information about the "social origins" of their material objects. The artisans themselves not only like their higher sales prices, but also the fact that they now have control over their own images—after years of being bombarded by Western cultural heroes like Madonna and Michael Jackson, they are thrilled at being able to project their own cultural images on the global stage.

Admittedly, PEOPLink is just one tiny case example of grassroots development that takes advantage of the Internet. But it does show how, with lots of hard work and commitment, it is possible to revive some of the Web's original "human development" purpose, and make it much more than just a platform for the enrichment, consumption, and entertainment of the already-provident. As we continue to develop exciting new electronic commerce applications for the "Information Highway," we have an obligation to make sure that the "rest of us" who have never even made a phone call are not left by the roadside.

For more information:

www.PEOPLink.org

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resources. "How does it all come together?" asks Navarro, "The first step is to increase exposure of new technology to groups not currently participating, to raise awareness and communicate the benefits of available technology." After leaders of nonprofit associations are trained, the next goal is to develop information resources on the Web that could extend the use of the Internet for accessing social services sites for continuing education and other needs.

ters of all Internet users and servers, and an even higher share of Internet technology suppliers and commerce services.

Meanwhile, more than half the world's population has never even made a phone call, much less an Internet connection—even as the net worth of the world's top ten Internet billionaires has grown to exceed this lower half's entire net worth.

Of course it is not really surprising that the diffusion of Internet technology should depend on country income levels to some extent. Initially, that was also the case with most other communication technologies, like telegraphy, telephony, radio, and television. But many governments quickly recognized the importance of those technologies to general economic development,

and intervened in various ways to extend their benefits to ordinary people.

The Internet has followed a different pattern. It had its roots, not in some Ayn Randian entrepreneur's risk-taking, or in visionary strategic moves by private corporations, but in not-for-profit projects that were undertaken for the most part by the public and academic sectors. These non-profit roots greatly influenced the kind of services that the Internet originally promoted—like low-cost e-mail, publishing, newsgroups, and the distribution of shareware and offbeat entertainment that were mainly of interest to professors, students, government bureaucrats, and computer nerds.

—James S. Henry



PARTNERS IN HEALTH

Health Under Siege

Community members work on a health project in Chiapas.

THE QUESTION IS ALWAYS SIMPLY this," Partners in Health's Dr. Kenneth Fox declared at the opening of the "Health Under Siege: Community-based Responses to Structural Violence" symposium, "How can the best of what scholarship offers be used to improve health outcomes among the poor? The work we will hear about today embodies that mission. Whether you face the problem of AIDS among the poor of Cange or Roxbury; the epidemic of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in Carabayllo, Peru; the wounds of exclusion and oppression in Chiapas or Cambridge or Egleston Square; wherever structural violence threatens to in-miserate, sicken, and crush the lives of the poor, you remain committed to thoughtful action."

Community health workers from Mexico, Haiti, Peru, and the United States exchanged experiences with each other and with students, faculty, and interested community during the two-day symposium in October at Har-

vard. The program was co-sponsored by Partners in Health and its Institute for Health and Social Justice, Harvard Medical School's Program on Infectious Disease and Social Change, and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

The words of the community health workers, eloquent testimonies to their local conditions, reflected the mission of Partners in Health and its Institute, to examine the influence of inequalities on health and illness by linking scholarship with community-based experience. The organization takes on health issues, including "women, poverty, and AIDS; world orders old and new; tuberculosis; the political economy of the pharmaceutical industry; or the geography of violence and terror in America's urban centers," according to Fox, a pediatrician who is both an instructor at Harvard Medical School and this year's Fellow at the Institute.

Partners In Health, under the direction of Paul Farmer and Jim

Yong Kim, is a Harvard-linked program committed to improving health in poor communities. Its goal is to make a "preferential option for the poor in health care" by working with community-based organizations in "pragmatic solidarity." Towards this aim, PIH offers technical and financial assistance, obtains funding and medical supplies, and helps administer its partner projects.

Most of the work has been done in close association with sister organizations in Haiti, Peru, Mexico, and the United States, particularly in the Roxbury section of Boston.

Although founded in 1987, the roots of the organization go back to 1983 when work began in central Haiti with a collective that is now called "Zanmi Lasante"—creole for "partners in health." In 1956, Haiti's largest river was dammed as part of an international development project, flooding the village of Cange and leaving its residents homeless. For years, Cange consisted of a

few shanties and a dispirited core of "water refugees," who had been forced to move to less fertile land. Gradually, Zanmi Lasante and the people of Cange built a large school and completed a project to bring clean water to the dusty settlement. Cange began to resemble a real village. Partners in Health grew out of this work and determination.

Blanca Jiménez, a Guatemalan from the Mam indigenous group, told the spellbound audience how she had resided as a refugee in Chiapas, Mexico, since 1990, working as a community health promoter, for the "Equipo de Apoyo en Salud y Educacion Comunitaria." Her husband Armando was "disappeared" early in the project, and she continued her efforts to find him while trying to work directly in bettering the plight of refugees. Armando had been the first and principle contact to Partners in Health, which in 1990 sought to bring his case to the attention of human rights and government organizations. It was eventually determined that Armando had been abducted from a town on the Guatemalan border.

"Human rights groups believe that Armando was abducted by Guatemalan security forces," declared Partner's Paul Farmer. "All these people were doing was struggling for the right to health care and decent living conditions. We knew, from that moment on, that we would continue working with the people of Chiapas, including Guatemalan refugees like Blanca."

Jiménez told the other community workers that she was especially interested in addressing women's issues. "Discrimination makes women more vulnerable to poor health and disease," she said. "We attempt to work with women as health promoters to discuss their reproductive rights and options that are pretty varied, such as making the decision to have or not to have children."

Each year the Institute honors a "front-line worker for social justice" with its Thomas J. White Prize. Blanca Jiménez was so honored the day after the symposium.

Dr. Gabriel García, who also works in community health in Chiapas, declared, "In Chiapas, the response to people's demands—demands for food, health, education, and work—has been met with helicopters of American fabrication, guns from Great Britain, military airplanes of Swiss fabrication, bullet-proof vests, and an impressive number of militaristic outlays. It was estimated at the beginning of this year that in Chiapas there was one soldier for every family. It would be a lot better if instead there was one doctor for every family."

García observed that it costs U.S. \$1.50 daily to feed each soldier; the money that is spent on food for the community per family is \$0.30 per day.

Haiti's Zanmi Lasante community health workers, Bossuet Sainvilus and Loune Viaud, explained the organization's history, that many members had been forced into exile, and that Paul Farmer, who served as the clinic's medical director had been barred from entering the country after the 1991 military coup. The clinic nevertheless managed to reopen as quickly as it could.

Bossuet Sainvilus recalled the effects of the construction of a massive dam on the lives of those who lost their land. It is with these "water refugees" that Zanmi Lasante has worked for the past 15 years.

But the coup d'état of 1991 was, Sainvilus recalled, the biggest blow of all. "Even the mechanics of getting the clinic opened posed major problems because if you were two or three people gathered together to talk then you had to be talking about Aristide and they would arrest you. Little by little we got the clinic open again and what sort of patients

do we see: people with tuberculosis, people with malnutrition, and people who had been beaten and tortured by the military. During that time we received a lot of threats from the military, and one of them said, 'That little white guy (Paul) who worked with you had better not set foot in Haiti ever again.'"

The community workers were spied upon and harassed. Things finally changed in Haiti, with the return of Aristide in 1994 to a certain degree in terms of democracy, but the struggle for justice and against institutional violence continues, he said.

Jaime Bayona, the director of Socios en Salud in Peru, told of institutional violence in another

form: malnutrition, forced sterilization, and inappropriately treated drug-resistant tuberculosis. But he reported that the team's major effort to treat those suffering with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis was a success "likely to influence global policy, since this is not a disease that will simply go away."

María Contreras, director of Soldiers in Health, brought the issue of Health under Siege home to her work in Roxbury: "I see such a similarity in the work that is happening in Chiapas, Mexico, the work that we do here at Egleston Square. The land of plenty seems to be the land of nothing. The cry of hunger by so many families looking for food

on Saturday evening or Sunday morning to the soldier office, make me understand what Gabriel (García) said. Because since this violence is silent no one cares. And it is this sort of violence that we are all fighting."

Dr. Jim Kim, executive director of Partners in Health, concluded, "People who are on the front lines of fighting for health and social justice, should have an opportunity to sit in a room like this and discuss their experiences, and discuss ways in which more interaction and the sharing of ideas could help us all. And we are quite sure it will inspire all the rest of us to continue in our efforts in whatever way we can."

—June Carolyn Erlick

Frontiers in Latino Popular Music

BY HILARY BURGER

THE IMPORTANCE OF *LATINO Popular Music* cannot be overemphasized, as the United States grapples with half a million Dominicans and 35% of Puerto Ricans living in New York, with an increasingly "Latinized" Los Angeles, and a myriad of new and established populations of Hispanic origin in small and medium sized cities throughout the nation. Deep and complex musical traditions have evolved together with these demographic transformations.

In the fall semester, Visiting Professor of Ethnic Studies, Romance Languages and Literatures and Music Deborah Pacini offered a new course entitled *Latino Popular Music* in both the Music Department and the Extension School at Harvard. The course examines the continuum in musical styles that have linked communities in the United States with their Latin American origins since World War I. In a rich exploration of musical expressions rang-

ing from salsa to Chicano rock, Pacini has brought to light an important new cultural theme in American society, and one increasingly relevant to a growing number of students at Harvard.

As Pacini and invited speaker Paul Austerlitz, a specialist on Dominican merengue, pointed out, the definition of popular musical styles is never finite. They are forms of expression created in communities in constant flux, and increasingly throughout this century, through migration and transculturation. Syncretism dominates much of the music discussed in the class, while at the same time, individual styles such as Central American and Mexican cumbia, New York and Miami salsa, and danza, jíbaro, bomba and plena, are explored for their indigenous and social roots in race, class, migration, and history.

Pacini's course demonstrates how different musical styles each have their own stories, as in narcorridos, which emerged from

border stories of smuggling and trafficking, and which have become legendary in Los Angeles. In the United States, many styles are inherently urban, as in the case of rap, but others maintain their rural roots. The children of Latino families may not speak Spanish, and often reject what they see as the outdated styles of their parents. However they often form new identifications in musics like banda and hip hop. The music explored is both hybrid and pure: black, white, and brown, linked to multiple ethnic constructions, like Puerto Rican, Dominican, Mexican, and finally, as Pacini herself has explored, in the newest amalgam of world music. In her lecture on Dominican bachata, Pacini ended the class with a recording of a New York-based bachata rendition of Roberta Flack's classic "Killing Me Softly," with rap lyrics, a perfect symbol of the evolving nature of Latino musical experience in the United States today.

Latino Popular Music examines musical styles and aesthetics, along with the music industry, issues of commercialization, and complex questions of authenticity. At the same time, as in the case of bachata, which still retains a distinctly local flavor in the Dominican Republic, Pacini's course highlights the importance of musical styles that continue to resist homogenization.

The distinctions in popular musical cultures between the East and West Coast form a central theme in Pacini's course, although there is much evidence of ongoing cross-fertilization. In New York and Los Angeles, music is a cultural and a social phenomenon. One of the highlights of the course is the focus on Latin music in Los Angeles, ranging from traditional Mexican styles to newer songs of outspoken social criticism, as in the trenchant lyrics of the group Los Illegals.

As part of the class, Caprice Corona ('97) delivered a guest lecture on the social significance of Latino rap and hip hop in Los Angeles, based on her senior thesis, which she wrote as a joint concentrator in Anthropology and Music. Rap and hip hop arose in urban Latino and African American communities in the 1970s and 1980s, in a period of rising unemployment. For Corona, a third generation Mexican American from Sacramento, California, music, break dancing, and art are all ways in which Latino and African American youth reappropriated cultural space for themselves, to counter growing economic and social marginalization.

One of the most interesting findings in her research was the very fluidity of ethnic and racial identifications. Groups such as Delinquent Habits dress like Mexican cholos, and sing lines like "It wouldn't be L.A. without Mexicans." Its singers, though, include only one Mexican; the others call themselves the



Amin DeJesus performs at an outdoor concert. His older brother, Pavel, is a member of the popular group, Proyecto Uno.

"Blaxican" (Black and Mexican) and the "guero loco," or the crazy white guy. The Cyprus Hill group consists of a Cuban, an Italian (from New York) and a Cuban/Mexican singer. Still these groups are, in Corona's words, "adamant in portraying their Latino-ness," even though they may not aim for an exclusively Latino audience.

Rap lyrics come in many layers, incorporating Spanish and English, Spanglish, and in California, ethnically charged words like those in Nahuatl, in a music

that Corona describes as "thick with cultural references." Like many forms of popular music, rap and hip hop were originally shunned by both television and radio, only later to be accepted in more "marketable" forms, a phenomenon that raises difficult issues of crossing, authenticity, and purpose.

The untangling of social, racial, and ethnic identities and cultural inclusion and exclusion are themes in the course, which offers students a forum to discuss and compare their own experiences

alongside more scholarly studies. Students in the course, which requires fieldwork on an aspect of Latino popular music in Boston, bring an enormous breadth of experience and knowledge to the class. Their research includes topics such as Latin jazz, gender-based perceptions of dance floor etiquette in salsa, and a study of the local market for Latin music. The course serves as a stimulus for further research in a field that virtually all authors agree remains seriously understudied.

Students in *Latino Popular Music* are musical activists and participants, keen observers, and members of a new generation of musical cultures dynamic in their evolution. In discussions, readings, and recordings, they explore the meaning of the varied and collective "we" that is called Latino. Beyond affirming identities, we learn that there are new questions emerging in music, about ambiguity, class, and social and cultural aesthetics that affect Latino and non-Latino musical creators and consumers today.

Hilary Burger recently completed her PhD in Latin American History at Harvard.

BOOKS

A Violence Called Democracy

The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy, by Jennifer Schirmer,

University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998

A REVIEW BY LARRY ROHTER

AS ANY JOURNALIST OR DIPLOMAT who has spent time in Guatemala will attest, no group there is more difficult to penetrate than the Guatemalan Armed Forces. As much a caste as an institution, the military distrusts outsiders and is reluctant to deal with them. There is ample reason for

that, of course: as one human rights report after another has detailed, officers and soldiers ordered and carried out the vast majority of the estimated 200,000 killings and disappearances that took place during the country's 36-year civil war.

Given that record and the wariness that accompanies it, Jennifer

Schirmer's "The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy" is a remarkable achievement. Over a period of a decade, she succeeded in getting more than 50 Guatemalan officers, from generals at the Ministry of Defense to sergeants out in the field, not only to agree to inter-

views that directly addressed these issues but to speak with uncanny candor about their actions, their beliefs, and their relations with forces ranging from civilian Guatemalan politicians to the American military and intelligence establishment.

The central figure in Schirmer's treatment of what she rightly calls "the most powerful, least researched and least understood institution in Guatemala" is Gen. Hector Gramajo Morales, whom she interviewed 14 times during a five year period. As Minister of Defense between 1987 and 1990 and Deputy Chief of Staff and self-proclaimed "granddaddy" of Guatemalan intelligence before that, Gramajo played a leading role in first supervising the formal transition to civilian rule and then fending off a coterie of high-ranking officers who were unwilling to cede even the appearance of power in order to retain its essence.

Loquacious but canny, Gramajo argues that in Guatemala, von Clausewitz's famous dictum works in reverse: "politics must be the continuation of war." Schirmer shows how Gramajo and other so-called "institutionalists" pushed for a system of "co-governance" that would grant compliant civilians just enough authority to argue abroad that Guatemala was in a democratic transition while simultaneously forcing those nominally in power to share the blame for the human rights abuses the military carried out.

"To interpret this opening as anything other than the army's intent to confuse responsibility with blame without granting the President power would be naive," Schirmer concludes. Or as Gramajo himself puts it, "my insurance is that my jefe knew everything. If there is something has been omitted or committed, it's not my responsibility, then, it's his."

Schirmer also introduces us to such important yet little-known figures as Col. Manuel de Jesús

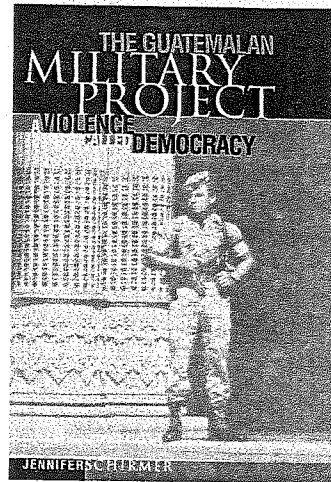
Giron Sanchez, private secretary to the country's last two military heads of state. A lawyer by training, Giron Sanchez worked behind the scenes as a "legal architect" to draft the statutes that embedded the military's supremacy in the current Guatemalan Constitution, thereby limiting the power of the four civilian presidents who have governed the country since 1986, including the current head of state, Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen.

I have covered Guatemala on and off since 1980, but until reading Schirmer's chapter on "A Military View of Law and Security" had not properly appreciated the importance the Guatemalan military attached to putting a legal gloss on its depredations and creating a system in which "emphasis is on the law as sanction rather than a system of rules." It is this "appropriation of the imagery of the rule of law, of the mechanisms and procedures of electoral democracy, that is perilous to human rights of Guatemalans," Schirmer notes.

Indeed, Schirmer's interviews

Recent events
buttress Schirmer's
conclusion that
"rather than being
out of control," the
Guatemalan military
"are in control" and
"acting in their own
best interest."

make clear that the entire Guatemalan military is afflicted with a severe case of cognitive dissonance, as might be expected of a force which pursued a policy she describes as "pacification by way of massacre." Anyone who dissents



from the military project, such as unions or human rights groups, is seen, ipso facto, as a subversive or delinquent who must be eliminated. Even "when political parties did try to organize, they were seen as 'disruptive' to 'the democratic project,'" Schirmer points out.

Most chilling of all, however, are the declarations of a longtime member of G-2, Guatemalan military intelligence. In an extraordinary interview that is cited several times in the main text and then published in much longer form as a separate appendix, this mid-level functionary of the state security apparatus strips away all the abstract language his superiors employ, and ends up acknowledging that the department is first and foremost a killing machine.

"The reason G-2 exists is to kidnap and torture until our subjects are wretched and maimed," he states. "Then they are assassinated, thrown in a ravine, buried or left by the side of the road. That's the work we do." He concedes that "sometimes I would kill a person who was innocent" but then adds: "The fact is that we enjoyed our work. At least that was true for me. I liked it because I brought to it much of the resentment from my earlier life."

From their comments, Schirmer's military informants make it clear that the American Embassy and the Central Intelligence Agency knew precisely what was happening and

made a conscious choice to look the other way. But Washington's cynicism was matched by others: when Jimmy Carter sought to distance the U.S. from the government of Gen. Romeo Lucas García, advisors and weapons from Argentina, Colombia, Israel and Taiwan quickly poured in to take their place, and the level of violence substantially increased.

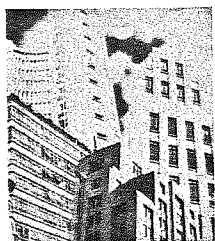
Schirmer is writing about a period that ostensibly concluded with the signing of a peace agreement, sponsored by the United Nations, that brought an end to the civil war on Dec. 29, 1996. But the structure of military primacy and impunity she describes lingers on, and her examination of it helps explain why the government investigation into the April 1998 assassination of Bishop Juan Gerardi, a leading human rights advocate, has degenerated into a farce.

Indeed, Col. Byron Lima, named by human rights groups as the main suspect in the murder but ignored by government investigators, figures in some earlier episodes that Schirmer discusses. As if more proof were needed, those recent events buttress Schirmer's conclusion that "rather than being irrational and out of control," the leaders of the Guatemalan military and intelligence apparatus "are precisely in control and acting in their own best interest."

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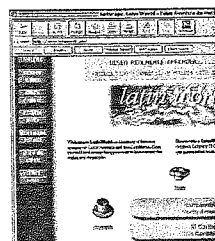
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