

The Experts Speak

Technology is increasingly present in our lives and is improving and simplifying the ways we work and play every day. But who decides what kind of technology we need and why? Behind Orange's innovative products and services is a whole world of research, including five researchers and sociologists at Orange Labs who study human behaviour patterns and find out what people need and want from technology (and perhaps what they don't yet know they want!).

Sharing the emotion of major events

Participants from the Orange Labs usage laboratory:

- Valérie Beaudouin, head of social sciences
- Christophe Aguiton, researcher
- Zbigniew Smoreda, researcher
- Thomas de Bailliencourt, researcher

Major crowd-pulling political, sport and cultural events are like ceremonies that arouse emotion in the participants, who then share their emotion with others. Even when spectators are watching on television screens, these events inspire an explosion of conversation, demonstrating participants' desire to share emotions. Communication tools create a web of links around the event, allowing people to share the vibes, even when they are physically far apart.

Reality TV

TV reality shows are real "chat factories" that provide a unique way of fuelling conversation and also inspire the production of amateur content. Human networks are formed around these shows, and the pace of conversations follows and augments the pace set by the programme. The intensity of conversation in chat rooms corresponds to what happens in the programme, showing that spectators are really involved in two activities: watching and commenting on what they saw with friends. On the Web, many viewers become producers of content based on the show by providing information and playing with the show's theme in various ways.

The 2006 World Cup

A football championship is an event that takes place over a long period of time. Each match, right up to the final, is a powerful moment. The closer the approach of the final, the bigger the TV audience and the more intense the telephone discussions. The number of calls grows faster than the size the audience.

On the days when matches take place, the number of mobile conversations is much higher, but they really explode at half-time and at the end of the match (or at the end of extra time). When spectators stop paying attention during advertising breaks, the TV audience drops and phone use explodes. During the game, attention is fully focussed on the match.

Internet use is also affected during recesses, as if there were a match-related suspension of ordinary activities.

Urban Mobs

While ceremonial television plays a fundamental role in orchestrating events, urban events also help create great moments of emotion-sharing among people. During the Fête de la Musique (Paris Music Festival), for example, people move towards and gather in places where performances are being held, changing the city's configuration and the movements of its inhabitants from their ordinary patterns.

A diagram of urban flow during the Fête de la Musique shows how the city is transformed as its residents pulsate around a major event. The density of some areas increases, while others empty over time, depending on when performances are taking place. People see their city come alive and relive the emotions they experienced as participants.

The desire to be together at major events and share the experience is fundamentally human. There is a natural alliance between the mass media, which creates events ("ceremonial television"), and the means of communication that publicise them, creating a link between the vertical (broadcasting) and the horizontal (interpersonal communication networks).

Designing visibility: the typology of Web 2.0.

Speakers:

- Dominique Cardon, Orange Labs Sociologist
- Pascal Thomas, head of NExT.com, community websites and Web 2.0

In the course of just a few years, thousands of social networking sites popped up on the Web, with highly varied results. How is this growing world of meeting places, networks and sharing organised?

A map of Web 2.0 based on the way people present their digital identity (revealed, disguised, virtualised, etc.) and their social networks (not shown, visible to small groups, visible to everyone) reveals an organisation based on two types of tension. The first is between sites that allow users to express their identity through fixed traits (sex, age, profession, etc.) and others that allow users to project their identity through their own work – 'being' as opposed to 'doing'. The second tension is between the projection of a 'real' identity and the projection of a simulated or virtual identity. When the various Web 2.0 services are projected onto a map according to these two dimensions – being vs. doing, and projection vs. simulation – five visibility formats are seen in relation to the form and visibility of social networks, and navigation and search methods in these areas.

Through its services, the Web offers users a wide range of ways of displaying their digital identity (revealed, disguised, virtualised, etc.) and their social networks (not shown, visible to small groups, visible to everyone). The diverse ways these sites allow users to display their identity is adapted to the various ways subjects want to present themselves and their social networks.

Many innovations, adapted to different types of identity profiles (which are probably different from traditional socio-demographic profiles), are still possible in these areas.

<http://www.internetactu.net/2008/02/01/le-design-de-la-visibilite-un-essai-de-typologie-du-web-20/>