

Masquerade in the blogroom György Csepeli

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www.csepeli.hu



The critical mass

- there can be any doubt of the nature of change that over the past decades has dramatically transformed the way people communicate and interact in the world
- the number of people communicating online at the end of the last century has risen above 450 million and due to the surge of 3G mobile technology this number is expected to double in each year
- In Hungary the number of people using the internet in 2008 has risen above 40 % of the population of 10 million
- early adapters & early majority
- late majority are to come
- scepticism, technological conservatism, traditionalism

Causes of diffusion of Internet usage

- **quickness**
- **easiness**
- **inexpensiveness**
- **freedom from constraints (physical and psychological)**
- **mutual production and consumption of contents**
- **new models of business, politics, culture and private life**

Enlargement of the sphere of communication

- big becomes bigger (language communities)
- small languages can benefit as well
- chat rooms, newsgroup, electronic mail exchanges, message boards, web 2.0
- contents: political views, psychological advices, entertainments, self-presentation

Anonimity

- no need to disclose identity
- pseudonames, nicknames
- plays with self (concealment, mimicry, secrecy, deception)
- experimentation with gender, race, age, occupation, social status, physical traits



Trap of identity

- **deindividuation**
- **lack of control**
- **reduced sense of responsibility**
- **„daily me”**
- **unleashing of „id”**
- **tendency to produce antisocial impulsive and disinhibited behavior (Zimbardo)**
- **„remote control” (Milgram)**
- **loss of individual self-awareness**
- **impossibility to unmask**

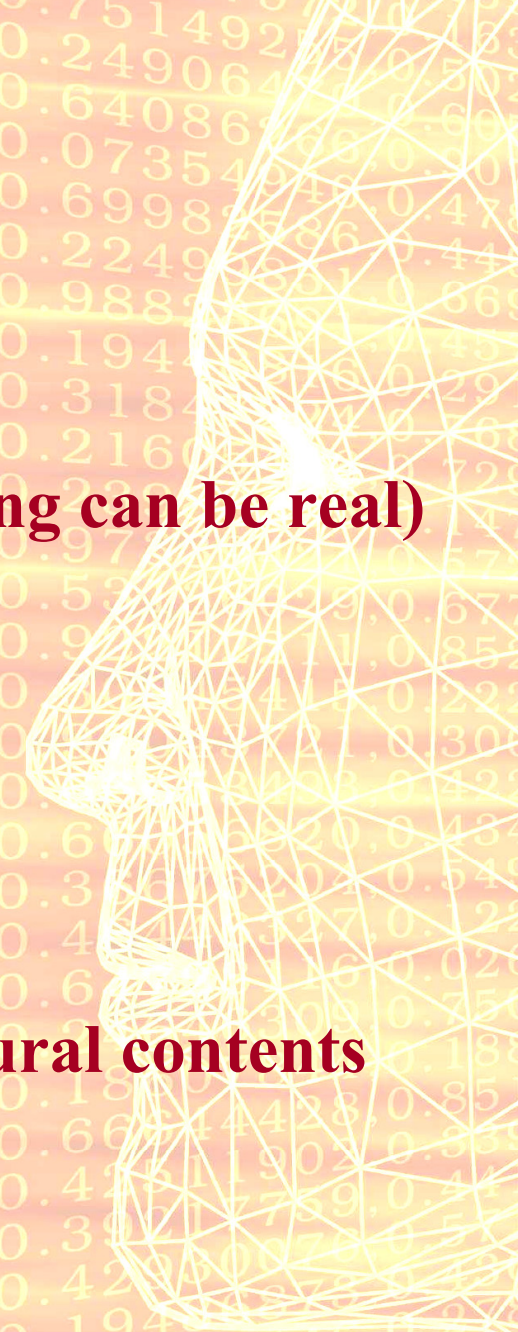


Flaming

- **practice of engaging in an angry, hostile, offensive behavior**
- **violation of Grice's rules**
- **no relevance, no quality, no clearness, no quantity rules (redundance or crypticism)**
- **no willingness to be understood**

My blog

- participant observation
- election campaign of 2006
- only the author had real name (if anything can be real)
- „Blogter” (blogroom)
- scandal, fight
- campaign phase
- after the campaign
- transition from political contents to cultural contents



Destructiveness

- **political hatred**
- **compulsive character**
- **verbal vandalism**
- **passions and hatreds**
- **resistance to cognitive complexity**
- **avoidance of irony**
- **vanishing of the border between craziness and proselytizing**



Support

- sympathy
- constructive approach
- elaboration
- discussion
- responsiveness



Risk or promise?

- „vanity press” (A.Keen)
- „electronic mob” (L.Siegel)
- „polarisation entrepreneurs” (Sustein)
- no deliberation
- partisanship and sectarian commitment
- wiki democracy

Plans for analysis (www.csepeleli.blogspot.hu)

- **Time span: March 1, 2006-July 4, 2008**
- **5 posts/week**
- **Establishing the vocabulary**
- **Operationalization of text variables**
 - **frequency**
 - **conotation**
 - **context**
- **Independent variables: (genre, period)**



Thank you for your attention!

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