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The PSAUME project.

Peoples Socially underpriviledged: Analysises of the Usage and of the Means to Expand them.

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The success of the Internet and the growing number of the services paradoxically increase the gap between the users of the Internet and the people who became stangers to new technologies because of their geographical positions, their cultures or other forms of isolation.

Our project aims to study the initiatives taken to make these people use the Internet, so that the actions and trainings towards them can be improved. The brakes to the usage will be analysed from a research among social groups and from the actions made in parallel within a pioneer city in this kind of initiative: Brest, distinguished 4@ at the "Ville-Internet" label. A description of the usage developed by those who, in spite of their "e-society outsiders" profil, have appropriated these technologies. This project is realised in the context of the first call for projects on the usage of the Internet made by the French Ministry dedicated to Research and New Technologies. It is realised by M@rsouin, in partnership with the City of Brest. It was planned to last 18 months, from may 2004.

[The project web site (French)](#)

Project objectives.

The success of the Internet and the growing number of the services paradoxically increase the gap between the users of the Internet and the people who became stangers to new technologies because of their geographical positions, their cultures or other forms of isolation. Today, the development of online services - whose emblem is the website http://www.service-public.fr - threatens to intensify the social exclusion of the non-connected or non-trained people. Our project aims to study the initiatives taken to make the people who has an "e-society outsider" profil have the opportunity to have a real access to the Internet.

Internet is not a monolithic artifact but a "processual subject". It deeply covers varied realities related to the terminals mobilized and to the interfaces and contents selected or left throughout the practises. The heterogeneity of the network of the networks is all the more confirmed than its growing spread within the different strata of the population testifies the attachment of new people whose social identities are clearly more varied. If we want to get which practises will lately structure the networks configuration, more attention has to be paid toward the variety of the practises, to the contents mobilized and the forms of bonds which are growing between the social and the electronic networks.

Here is a theoretical questioning in sociology about the role of the social identities in the appropriation of the Internet technologies. This question joints the evident social issue of the actions that have to be led to reduce the numerical gap, which is more synonymous with social exclusion. This also joints the "technical goal" according to which the public devices for the access to the Internet (public access point in the city and country of Brest first and the other public access points then) are looked forward to being improved. Our aim is then to give the "e-society outsiders" the opportunity to understand the usage of the Internet that have already been implemented and are still not well known, and so through a solid scientific approach. All of it takes part of the third part of the MRNT call which aims to integrate the coming groups of identified people within the society.

Project organization.

The main stages are:

- realize an inquiry (on the one hand, survey followed by a face-to-face interview of a subpopulation used as a sample and, on the other hand, survey on the usages in public spaces of Brest) to people belonging to the working classes (which means corresponding to scio-demographic criteria such as the level of income, the type of housing,...) about the objective conditions of living of people (work, sociability, leisure,...) and the structure of the eventual use of the Internet.

The aim is to propose a typology of their "online usages".

- make research in three districts socially underpriviledged: two in the area of Paris and one in Brest, based on semi-structured interview. The aim is to evaluate what the people who doesn't use the Internet expects and especially to determine the impact of the volontary policies led in Brest upon these usage;

- share these works to suggest measures improving the training policies and the implication of the "e-society outsiders".

Project fallouts.

The project will first be promoted through scientific publications (a special edition of the French magazine "Réseaux" about the usage of the Internet within population socially underpriviledged can, for instance, be considered).

However, as the project is supposed to let us have a better understanding of what the "e-society outsiders" expect, we consider that these results could help improving the efficiency of the policies led in their favor. We look forward to spreading these results as far as possible.

Scientific references.

These socio-professional categories have hardly been taken care of by the sociology of the usage which mostly put its intention on social groups more "representative", more "technophile" who are supposed to have a list of usages a lot more developed (see, for instance, the CREDOC investigation made in november 2002). Our approach is partly inspired from the Birmingham school works which originally aimed to analyze the place and the role of the culture within working classes.

The ambition cultivated is, in particular, to catch the sense of the telematic uses of the working classes or other classes seen the same way. This methodology of inquiry (face-to-face interviews) towards a large enough population of representatives of the sub-peoples studied (Internet users and non-users in the districts). The 54 public access points - PAPI - device developed by the city of Brest (Brest, 4@-town) to suggest a description of the uses developed from public places of training. Finally and to complete our analysis, we will study the barriers to the use from an inquiry among social groups towards non-users.

Social demand.

After six years of deployment, a significant number of host places of distant people offer today an assisted access to the Internet. Our project answers the will, expressed in particular by the town of Brest (4@-city in the "Ville-Internet" Label) and of its partners ("Villes-Internet", VECAM association), to help them making their policies of public access to the Internet (development of about fifty numerical public spaces, formations) evolve, in particular towards the people who appears most distant from the Internet. This joints a strong questioning at a Breton level (a reflexion is being developed about the regional program of creation of public access points in which Marsouin takes part, see Marsouin's study), and at the national level, as the Ministry's invitation shows it.