

Chapter 30

Shared Values in Social Media and Comics Scan Communities as New Belonging–Marks

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is part of a doctoral study that is currently underway in Brazil and suggests that different interaction environments shares common symbolic-interactive elements. This idea is ruled by three argumentative horizons: the idea of hypermodernity, proposed by Gilles Lipovetsky, the perspective of Networked Individuality, as suggested by the researchers Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, and the hypermediation concept, as proposed by Carlos Scolari. The central core of this research refers to a kind of belonging-values shared by individuals and how they articulate them through their symbolic mediated-interactive sphere. The chapter establishes an approach between the Internet communities of comics digital preservation in Brazil and the interactive production of meanings through it, indicating there could exist some common meta-signs to the developed and interactional-creative core in these different hypermedia production/reproduction environments processes, and the chapter suggests that any analysis needs to consider these values/marks.

INTRODUCTION

It was on mid-September 2012 when the *So-Quadrinhos*¹ forum website community was taken down. In Brazil, the *SoQuadrinhos* is a major interactive and collaborative hub dedicated to the dissemination and diffusion of *scans*: a subcultural expansion of comics fandom sphere that emerged with the illegal digitalization of copyrighted comics. On that month, a group called *Ashtrad Hackers*,

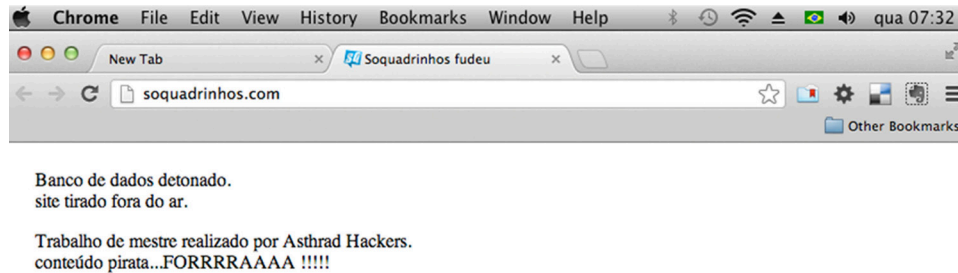
as said by the message left on the front page of the forum, imploded the community databases and all assembled information that feeded the portal and, therefore, had put down and temporarily left their users and associates without their main collaborative meeting hub.

Besides this action, the group also left a state message commenting the invasion and an alert for the users community: “pirated content!?! OUUUUUTTT!” (Sic). They left it as a reminder

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Figure 1. Message left by the group *Asthrad Hackers* after attack to the *SoQuadrinhos* host in November 21, 2012



and a warning for users and what they usually do collaboratively speaking - dealing with something that is considered somehow illegal: the translation/adaptation of unauthorized copyrighted comic books to digital format.

Thus, during that month, while associates and others enthusiasts of that subcultural environment - who has the forum as an expression - were pursuing alternatives to recover the lost data, they also sought to inform and update users and supporters of the community about what really happened - and what the major staff of the community was trying to do to contour it: the action of a group opposed to the collaborative experience created by the forum had taken it down and that action could be the result of a new strategy against communities dedicated to scanned comics (or scan communities, as we're referring to these collaborative hypermediated efforts).

The understanding spread through the community was that the *Asthrad Hackers* action was kind harmful, but with a positive side. For its users, the attack evidenced a relatively important transition for the forum and their users: if in one hand a communicational and cultural industrial expression became a kind of hostage of the change occurred around its productive/consumerist environment, on the other the tactical initiatives of the fandom of this same industry became invested with a peculiar logic of consumption combining appropriation, adaptation and (re)distribution as some signs of a contemporary hyperindividual

affirmation - and inclined to demonstrate the colors of their collaboratively mark. The episode experienced by the *SoQuadrinhos* community users was one of several events that threatened similar spaces dedicated to the scan subculture in the same week. As the *SoQuadrinhos* forum, communities as *Baú da Marvel*² (also devoted to comic scans but with preservationist purposes and focus on the *Marvel Comics* memorabilia published by Brazilian publish companies) and others were also attacked and taken down as a result of similar hacker actions.

A few days after the attack, the *SoQuadrinhos* community was back to business, restarting its activities as other communities and blogs dedicated to the scan subculture. The community based the return on a new policy very similar to that adopted by other groups equally dedicated to adaptation of media and hypercultural content focused on the Internet: it begin to foster a closer relationship with its users, seeking, above all, a greater commitment of its associates with the product of that expression subcultural-collaborative.

For the community, this effort for reconstruction should be mean not only the support or recognition of the actions of its associates, but also through fostering, donations and other actions that could be reversed for the construction of a hypertechnological support structure back to the community and guaranteeing the maintenance of that space for communitarian interaction and collaborative.

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