#culturadigitalbr: An Open Way to Build Public Policy

http://eco-rama.net/2009/08/03/culturadigitalbr-an-open-way-to-build-public-policy/#more-310

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I've been away from this blog, and from about everything else, because of the huge effort to put up the 'Brazilian Digital Culture Forum' — culturadigital.br. I will come back later to better explain what's going on, but for now I will reblog a nice description of what we are doing by Gilberto Jr., a Brazilian blogger who was able to follow the many steps of the Forum's process until now. [See also the Global Voices report]

The proposition of the Brazilian Digital Culture Forum: open and participatory

The Brazilian Digital Culture Forum has a social network for collaborative production of public policy for contemporary Brazil. This is a web platform that supports a broad spectrum of cultural programs based on the ideas and initiative generated by citizens, which includes face-to-face events and is expected to wrap up in November.

The Brazilian Digital Culture Forum was launched by the Minister of Culture in partnership with the National Network of Education and Research. The object of the Forum is, through these events, to encourage debate about digital culture with activists, business representatives, government institutions and non-governmental organizations. It's in this context that the social network can work to both accelerate discussion and unify ideas.

Social network functions like others, but with focus on digital culture and public policy

The web platform aims to bring together citizens who are thinking about how technology can contribute to better our society, as well as anyone wanting to ponder digital culture. The main idea of the Cultura Digital network is that it is open. In addition to bringing these people together, digital culture provides interaction and stimulates the co-creation of events and projects.

The activities of each user generate alerts in the system, along the lines of "Ann and Joan are now friends" and each profile generates an RSS feed (all new content and actions generated by a user in the network can be followed outside of the network, such as through an RSS reader). The Cultura Digital network also has an indexing function (collected and displayed automatically), which tags content produced by its users in other social networks with the tag #culturadigitalbr.

There are five initial themes for discussion, but citizens can suggest others

The user of the Cultura Digital social network is responsible for his or her own profile and for the content he or she divulges: photos, videos, links, posts on his or her blog. Through the profiles, users can find friends and establish affinity networks. There are various groups in which a user can participate, which function like communities. The main themes suggested are Art and Digital Techology, Digital Communication, Digital Economy, Infrastructure for Digital Culture, and Digital Memory.

Highlighting several positive points in this initiative

The simple fact that the federal government initiated this project is highly commendable. It opens discussion within communities, using the web as a base to stimulate discussion and create a kind of digital democracy (not just in the world of computing, but in Brazil in general). Other technical and

managerial aspects also add value to this project:

- The social network is built in BuddyPress, an open source plugin for WordPress MU;
- Every new user gets a blog, where he or she can generate content and others can comment;
- It maintains the governments stand on investing in free software that can benefit the whole community, not just investing in products, but in the software itself;
- The Ministry of Culture is using WordPress;
- The implementation is impeccable: excellent interface, excellent system, coordinated by the director of the Brazilian Digital Culture Lab, Rodrigo Savazoni, and by the head of digital culture at the Ministry of Culture, José Murilo.