Strategic Transmissions:
Livemedia and the Intensive *Spatium*

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This paper seeks to contextualise the contemporary field for the project LIVEMEDIA and to propose a networked space, or Extranet possessing the qualities of intensity and duration. The contemporary field is identified as the Internet, the networked space is identified as an Intensive *Spatium*.

LIVEMEDIA (http://www.lab-livemedia.net) is an artist led project based in Barcelona collaborating with cultural and academic centres in Spain, France and Latin America. Its aim is to exploit the platform of the Internet as a live environment for transcultural and interdisciplinarian collaborations. LIVEMEDIA aims to use real world spaces in convergence with the telematic spaces of the Internet for the creation of simultaneous, complicit and intelligent "live mediated environments". The premise of production is the articulation of a networked field for emergent live assemblages. Heterogeneity should be inevitable.

The Internet is the world's largest and most complex network, processing and driving the globalisation of culture and communication. It is a perpetually transformative space where "value" is constantly fragmented by infinite streams and manipulations. The Internet is increasingly becoming a live environment. In March 2005 Adam Bosworth, then vice president of engineering at Google, stated: "Presence is in the air. The web because of mobile and broadband and Instant Messaging is becoming real-time. Real time presence changes everything and rapidly leads to thinking about much richer ways of communicating within communities."[1] During the last year, commercial web development has morphed from Social Networks (MySpace, Facebook) into Social Media (Kyte, Twitter, Jaiku and Qik). With these real-time web applications it is possible to communicate, syndicate, aggregate, stream, or even *broadcast as a conversation* data, from anywhere, at any moment, via any intelligent device.

Social Media web applications are at the vanguard of the ongoing convergence between Internet and mobile telecommunications. Evidenced by the movement away from the stationary access point of the computer monitor to any intelligent device, we are witnessing a realignment of the online<·>offline interface. Our tacit online<·>offline interface is becoming fuzzy and fragmented. The spectacle is over: soon all will become mediated. Now we are always online. Now streams of communication follow, forming kinds of *bioweapons*.[2] How soon is it before we ask: *How can I be* "off" *offline*?

Central to this paper is Felix Guattari's observation: "But how, with [...] this fragmentation of interfaces, can we still speak of Universes of value?"[3] For Guattari fragmentation represents both a destabilisation of globalised aesthetics and the striving towards a new ontology of creativity. Destabilisation is the moment of engagement with mutant assemblages of enunciation, a contamination of the ideal monad and the creation of intensive transversality, diversity and heterogeneity. We understand these processes as the actualisation of difference. Continuing with Guattari's terminology, the question at hand is what tool or medium has the capacity to activate the necessary contingents that engage the composites of enunciative assemblages, actualise infinities and break the established formal boundaries?

Within electronic art, an example of how Internet technologies have been used to fragment the online<·>offline interface is found in LIVEMEDIA's antecedent *Theatre Virtual* (2001-2006).[4] Here the ongoing problematic concerned the investigation of actual connections between theatre and Internet. The attractor or tool of engagement was livestream video. Following Paul Virilio's analysis of the logic of the image through its ages of "formal", "dialectic" and "paradoxical", to have approached theatre from the virtualities of second generation Internet technologies (i.e. "non-html" Internet content) represented the construction of a paradoxical image.[5]

> Values only have universal significance to the extent that they are supported by the Territories of practice, experience, of intensive power that transversalise them.[6]

LIVEMEDIA investigates the Internet's emergent "live topologies", where communication is subject to advanced techniques of control, where experiences complexify and disperse, where assemblages populate and differentiate live processes. The intention is to implicate a new kind of dimension that envelops "the multiple durations of disparate cultural formations and milieus".[7] It needs to be "hackable", "viral", open to micro-ecologies and fluxes of intensive interconnections.
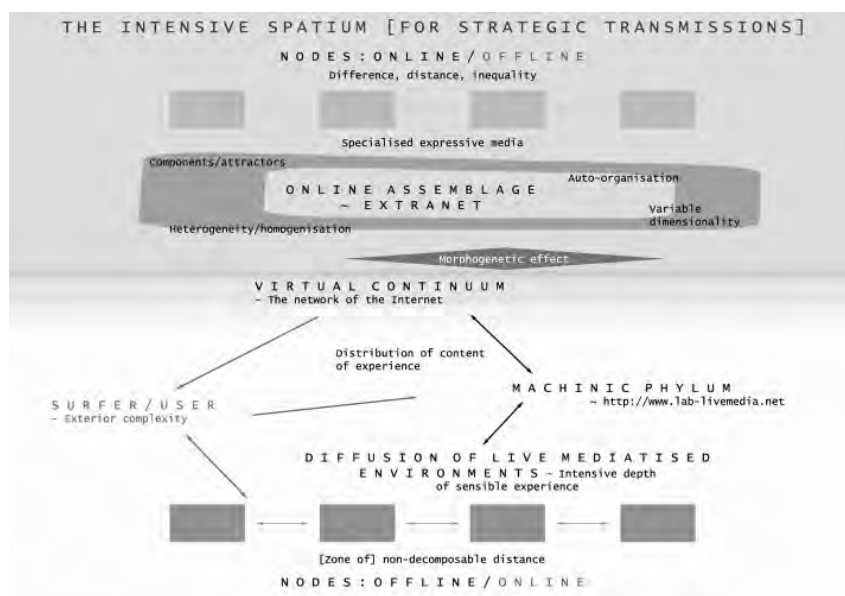
Implicit to any emergent live topology is the need for a heterogeneous network. Guattari theorises a position where modern communication has the tendency to standardise subjectivity which, at its most extreme, becomes no more than "an exchange of information tokens calculable as bits and reproducible on computers."[8] If the tendency of communication is to veer towards homogeneity rather than heterogeneity, is there an alternative concept? In his book *Transmitting Culture* Régis Debray presents a comparison between communication and transmission. For Debray "Communication excels by cutting short; transmission by prolonging. […] Human beings communicate, more rarely do they transmit lasting meaning".[9] Debray asks: "How does the mediated object of study transmit itself and its meaning?" and concludes that "the art of transmission, or making culture, consists of adding a strategy to logistics, a praxis to a techne. What persists over time is the art of composition."[10]

What is required is a complex, multiple and strategic composition of space, where assemblages of transmissions are reflected by duration. LIVEMEDIA recognises: an anthropological space — an intensive and distributive space (or Intensive *Spatium*) — a space for resources and formation — a space for cultural and artistic events.

Our focus is on the term assigned to the creative zone of the Intensive *Spatium*. Irreducible to concepts and open to ideas, the Intensive *Spatium* "actualises connections" and initiates presences, in the sense of productions or emergences from the total field (schema, magnitude, matter, designation). Some may ask: why are we not discussing the complexities of the rhizome as most famously theorised by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their book of 1980 *A Thousand Plateaus*? In short the concept of the rhizome is not sufficient. Substantially, it is a perfect description of the World Wide Web, whereas the Intensive *Spatium* refers to experience and to the intensity of experience, bringing a positive characteristic

of depth for the determination of ideal connections and differential relations.

The diagram *The Intensive Spatium (for strategic transmissions)* is drawn up from Manuel DeLanda's notations on the Deleuzian Intensive *Spatium*.[11] Although it is possible to think of the Intensive *Spatium* in the singular as the "intensive depth of sensible experience", as with the majority of Deleuze's concepts, the Intensive *Spatium* has many names including *machinic phylum, virtual continuum, body without organs and plane of immanence* — each name being dependant on the process at hand. The intention is to use these different moments or kinds of processes to construct an operativity within LIVEMEDIA's networked space that is inclusive of: online<·>offline, assemblage, transmission, distribution, diffusion and so on. The significant addition to the concept of Intensive *Spatium* is the "surfer/user as exterior complexity."

THE INTENSIVE SPATIUM [FOR STRATEGIC TRANSMISSIONS]
NODES: ONLINE/OFFLINE
Difference, distance, inequality

Specialised expressive media

Components/attractors
ONLINE ASSEMBLAGE
~ EXTRANET
Auto-organisation
Variable dimensionality

Heterogeneity/homogenisation

Morphogenetic effect

VIRTUAL CONTINUUM
~ The network of the Internet

Distribution of content of experience

MACHINIC PHYLUM
~ http://www.lab-livemedia.net

SURFER/USER
~ Exterior complexity

DIFFUSION OF LIVE MEDIATISED
ENVIRONMENTS ~ Intensive depth of sensible experience

[zone of] non-decomposable distance
NODES: OFFLINE/ONLINE

1 http://www.adambosworth.net/archives/2005_03.html. Page accessed 10th August 2006

2 Terranova, Tiziana. 2004. *Network Culture, Politics for the Information Age*. London: Pluto Press, p.142.

3 Guattari, Félix. 1995. *Chaosmosis, an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*. Sydney: Power Institute, p.108.

4 http://www.teatrevirtual-mercatflors.net (2001-2003), http://www.teatrevirtual.net (2003-2006)

5 Virilio, Paul. 1994. *The Vision Machine*. Bloomington: British Film Institute, p.63.

6 Guattari, Félix. 1995. *Op. cit*, p.130.

7 Terranova, Tiziana. 2004. *Op. cit*, p.135.

8 Guattari, Félix. 1995. *Op. cit*, p.104.

9 Debray, Régis. 2000. *Transmitting Culture*. New York: Columbia University, pp.3-5.

10 Ibid, p.13.

11 DeLanda, Manuel. 2002. *Intensive Science & Virtual Philosophy*. New York & London: Continuum, pp.158-159.