

Mobile Phone Usage by *Motoboys* – A Controlled Experiment in the Greater São Paulo Area

Briefing of Experimental Design by Gilson Schwartz, Research Leader, City of Knowledge Research Group, President, Research Committee, Dept. of Film, Radio and TV, School of Communication and Arts, University of São Paulo

Overview

This experiment is sponsored by Fundación Telefónica (Spain) and will focus on “motoboys” - a sector where cellular phones are used as an important part of doing business (information transfer is an important part of the work process, where cellular call prices are a significant cost, and where a price reduction is likely to make a difference). São Paulo’s motoboy sector includes a variety of organizational forms. Some are micro-enterprises (one self-employed individual, or a few), others are SME, such as delivery services based on motoboys workforce. Our units of analysis will be these groups. Sometime the same individual may be connected to different organizational forms (blending self-employment for extra jobs while doing heavy-duty routines for larger employees).

Within each surveyed group, we will collect data from a few individuals. We are looking at collecting data from a few hundred individuals so as to see whether price reductions affect how each group works as a network, not simply how individuals make their own calling decisions based on prices.

A complementary issue is to test the existence of cross-sector networks: if the two sectors have inter relationships that rely on cellular phones, then it would be interesting to study the related effects of call price reductions (for example, motoboys and pizzerias).

Within a population of micro-enterprises and individual entrepreneurs, we will give selected participants or even entire groups (as long as we expect to assess network effects) access to cell phones with different rate structures and then do on-going surveys to measure and interpret the following impacts and opportunities:

- impact on calling patterns (behavioral changes, value-added by users),
- impact on social and work networks (hierarchies, identity and expression),
- economic and technological opportunities (tools for problem-solving, income patterns).

During the design phase of the experiment, we will identify a series of quantitative and qualitative measures of those impacts and opportunities. Quantitative measures may include such items as phone traffic, network size, revenue per miles driven or jobs taken, security impacts on bike and car drivers, number and diversity of cell phone usage, switching patterns from pre-paid to post-paid regimes, innovative working and hiring strategies, etc., so as to frame some easily measurable indicators of economic efficiency. Qualitative measures will be derived from interviews (individual and focus groups).

The Motoboys Experience

The potential for research within the “motoboys” community in São Paulo is particularly

high.

http://stoa.usp.br/profile/extended.php?profile_name=motoboy

This will certainly be an important resource of information and connections with the motoboys community. The group has also been working with the Zexe.net project, an initiative of Antoni Abad with the support of the Spain Embassy in Brazil - “Cooperação Espanhola – Centro Cultural em São Paulo” - and the “Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior” in 2007. Schwartz participated in this project as lecturer in the exhibition “canal*Motoboy – 12 Motoboys Transmitem de Celulares”:



MOTOBOWS TRANSMITEM DE CELULARES
 O Motoboy no momento espaço público e privado do espaço de São Paulo. Motoboy de celulares com cultura da liberdade, tecnologia, status e praticidade em tempo real na internet das aplicações, transformando-se em conteúdos de sua própria realidade. Decidem mediar o espaço físico de trabalho e colaboram assim para a criação de espaços de dados e interação que seja capaz de gerar conexões e conteúdos. Em 2007 o projeto realizou análises em conteúdos publicados e coordenou a formação de grupos de trabalho dedicados a cada tema abordado pelo coletivo. Um projeto de comunicação audiovisual foi realizado para a cidade de São Paulo em 2007.



ESPAÇO PÚBLICO DIGITAL
 Ao utilizar o espaço de trabalho no momento espaço público e privado do espaço de São Paulo. Motoboy de celulares com cultura da liberdade, tecnologia, status e praticidade em tempo real na internet das aplicações, transformando-se em conteúdos de sua própria realidade. Decidem mediar o espaço físico de trabalho e colaboram assim para a criação de espaços de dados e interação que seja capaz de gerar conexões e conteúdos. Em 2007 o projeto realizou análises em conteúdos publicados e coordenou a formação de grupos de trabalho dedicados a cada tema abordado pelo coletivo. Um projeto de comunicação audiovisual foi realizado para a cidade de São Paulo em 2007.



Projeto apoiado pelo Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) através do Edital de Seleção de Bolsas de Iniciação Científica em 2007. Financiamento: Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) através do Edital de Seleção de Bolsas de Iniciação Científica em 2007. Financiamento: Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) através do Edital de Seleção de Bolsas de Iniciação Científica em 2007.



<http://www.zexe.net/SAOPAULO>

In short, before the contact with the research project we were already discussing economic aspects of cell phone usage among the “motoboys”, so that preliminary discussions on this issue have already taken place. At 150,000+ motorcycle professionals in the Greater São Paulo area, this seems to be a very promising focus community for the purpose of this economic experiment and the potential benefits of cell phone usage in large metropolitan areas.