Chapter 26

Art, Future, and New Technologies: Research or Business?

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ABSTRACT

The authors present the first results of a heuristic evaluation of online content and the social networks that allows the detection of the manipulators of the mass media communication, the universities, and the research centers in the Iberian Peninsula. They present the strategies used in a technique of heuristic evaluation called CASTE – Computer Art, Software, and Technology Evaluation. Finally, a first graphic is presented that shows the results of applying CASTE and the manipulating extension in other territories of the disguised research business in art and new technologies.

INTRODUCTION

Science, technology and art have always converged in an intersection, although in the history of humankind it was thought that it was not so. In this sense, it is impossible to think the impressionists as separate from the research on light and optics, for instance. Here is one of the reasons why it is necessary to make a short historic review of the evolution of science. The Greeks in the fifth century B.C. granted science a bidirectional relation, which is made up by a theoretical part and a practical one (McClellan & Dorn, 2006). However, they developed the theoretical aspect. That is, in that time and in that geographical context, reason prevailed to probe into the causes of the phenomena and consequently their effects. Now in the Arabic context the advance of the other component takes place, since it was they who looked for the practical and useful aspect of knowledge. Of course, along
the centuries the obtained data accumulated. It is so how the first libraries were made, which stored human wisdom until that time in the history of humankind. A classical example of storage of wisdom was the library of Alexandria, in ancient Egypt. Centuries later, Francis Bacon in view of the accumulation of data (experimental or observations) started to formulate and defend the need for hypothesis (Hannam, 2011). He stressed besides the transcendence of statistics for the progress of sciences. Galileo and Newton were responsible for giving birth to the modern sense of science thanks to the rational and empiric aspect that they added to it. Later on, humankind went through a period of great discoveries and inventions (Basalla, 1988). An outstanding place is taken by the print and simultaneously the circulation of books and ideas. In the 16th century a union took place that endures down to our days: science and technique. Science leaves the theoretical aspect behind little by little to start to become more practical. The techniques or instruments start to be used in a more dynamic way in the scientific process. In the context of graphic computing, for instance, we have this with the commercial software to make computer animations, compared with the programming of systems for scientific visualization. However, in the early 90s computer art based on dynamic and static images was turned into a show of new technologies in the Iberian Peninsula. The goal was to generate a new avant-garde whose mission consisted in the aesthetic homologation of the achievements of futurist science, especially in the fields of computer science, telecommunications, robotics, genetics, biology, etc. Not for nothing a myriad publications appeared where the 21st century was presented as the century of nanotechnology, biocomputering, etc. (Peterson, 2000; Cantrill, 2010). A way to reach that goal were certain international events both in Europe and America where the computer art was presented as synonymous of future and research, when in fact these events were organized with merely mercantilist purposes. Such statement stems from a diachronic analysis applying the CASTE technique, where it has been detected online a virtual but real complex social system into computer art and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) that combines some or all elements of social class, hierarchy, exclusion, endogamy, power and hereditary transmission of occupation. The difference of these events lies in the recipients of the main and secondary topics of the contents. That is, whether they are aimed at the public in general as in the Spanish case or rather at an audience of ICT professionals, computer graphics, computer animation, multimedia, etc., as is the Austrian case of Ars Electronica (www.aec.at), in its origins, or the Siggraph (www.siggraph.org) in USA. Theoretically all these events have R&D as the cornerstone of their contents, however the mercantilist factor prevails over R&D as it happens in the university educational sector in Southern Europe in the last two decades, for instance.

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In computer art, the exact accuracy is not required which is emulated in the screens of the computers such as the case of scientific visualization. As a rule, these authors worked with static images and in the 80s and early 90s they were painters, graphic designers, illustrators, etc. who went from analogue to digital media, for instance, 2D, 3D, animation, video, etc. It was these unprecedented static and dynamic images which struck the attention of the professionals of the computer sector and/or new technologies in general and the inexperienced public. Now some saw in these images a way to generate a power elite to control those productions. The goal was to control that production in the whole state territory, getting the maximum economic profits, in the least possible time and disguising them as R&D activities.

In others words, a diachronic analysis of two decades and thanks to the social networks (Face-