

# Content

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1 Preface and motivation</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2 Problem-definition</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1.3 Explanation of concepts</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1.4 Delimitation</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.5 Approach and Methodology</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.6 Analysis and theory</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.7 Readers Guide</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>2. The Internet</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 Approaches to the use of the Internet</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>2.3 Important points of discussion</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>3. Democracy</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>3.1 Democracy, an abstract notion</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>3.2 Namibia's government - SWAPO</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>3.3 Knowledge and information in a democratisation process</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>3.4 Democracy and the Internet</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>3.5 The role of education in society</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>3.6 The role of the Media in a democracy interrelated with the Internet</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>4. Namibia</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>4.1 Welcome to the country of the Brave</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>4.2 Namibia and the Internet</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>4.3 The Government strategies</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>5. Education, Internet - and Namibia</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>5.1 The University of Namibia</b> .....	<b>43</b>
5.1.1 UNAM Library .....	45
5.1.2 Students and the Internet .....	47

5.1.3 Staff and the Internet.....	50
5.1.4 Sub-Conclusion: UNAM & Internet – the bridge or the gap?.....	53
<b>5.2 Panhofi Secondary school.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>5.3 INCECT THON &amp;- School Net - a different approach for the children.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>5.4 UNESCO - MISA - AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>5.5 Analysis Part 2 - an overall perspective .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>A strong educational sector .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>6. <i>Analysis of Media-institutions part 1&amp;2</i>.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>6.2 Analysis of Alternative media and NGOs - Part 1, institutional level .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>6.3 Analysis of formal media, Newspapers - Part 1, institutional level .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>6.4 Analysis of the Internet use in Media - Part 2, societal level .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>7. <i>Conclusion</i> .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>8. <i>Perspectives</i> .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>9. <i>Bibliography</i>.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>ENCLOSURE A - Interviews.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>ENCLOSURE B - Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>ENCLOSURE C - Answers from UNAM survey .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>ENCLOSURE D - Abstract of project in Danish .....</b>	<b>105</b>

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Preface and motivation**

In the beginning of the 90ies the Internet reached wide public notion in the United States and in Europe, and its scope has grown enormously since then. Today the information communication technology has led to widespread notions of an "information revolution" and an "information super highway". One of the explanations given is: *"The fusion of computing and communications - especially through the Internet- has broken the bounds of cost, time and distance, launching an era of global of global information networking."*<sup>1</sup>

No doubt, the Internet offers tremendous advantages in fields of research and facilitates high-speed information gathering - advantages academics in the North have long appreciated. Furthermore the Internet offers new ways of communication through chat, e-mail, on-line discussions, mailing lists etc., facilities we ourselves have made use of to various degrees. But the facilities mentioned, mainly refers to a small elite situated in the United States and Europe. In other words, it refers to a small elite situated in continents packed with the results of information communication technology, ranging from cable telephones, tele-fax services, mobile phones to computers etc. But how does this relate to a global context, to notions of a "global information village"? In a global context electricity is a luxury of the few, and yet the talk of getting the South connected is gaining power in the development field? But what can the Internet offer to Sub Saharan Africa? To UNDP the advantages are clear: *"Unless African countries become full actors in the global information revolution, the gap between the have and the have-nots will widen, opening the possibility of increased marginalisation of the continent. On the other hand, participating in the information society offers tremendous opportunities for Africa to leapfrog over passed development deficiencies into the future."*<sup>2</sup>

This statement holds quite an offer to a continent faced with costly challenges of alleviating poverty, providing basic services in health and education and promoting democracy! Knowledge is considered an asset in this era, in line with assets such as gold, conquest of land and command of machinery, and is seen as crucial to gaining economic power. Thus the Internet, as a communication tool providing information, is believed to raise productivity. Furthermore the Internet can provide huge amounts of information of great value to, what is referred to as, the information-poor South.<sup>3</sup> The Internet is furthermore believed to strengthen democracy.<sup>4</sup> Has the cure to all of the constraints facing the African reality really been found?

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP 1999, p.57

<sup>2</sup> UNDP www. Undp.org/info21/text/index.html

<sup>3</sup> UNDP 1999

<sup>4</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998

With some scepticism and with a growing interest in investigating the promising Internet, our work was initiated. Searching for information about how the Internet can contribute to development processes, we came across an extensive amount of surveys commenting on, and pointing out the possible economic gains of utilising the Internet. But searching for specific information on how the Internet can strengthen democracy in an African context, was a rather different case. To our knowledge the only literature focusing on the Internet in relation to national democratisation processes is based on limited empirical data and is of a rather visionary character.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless there might be literature out there, but using several search engines and entering various sites and libraries both virtual and actual we were not able to find elaborate material on the issue.

Revealing the connection between democracy and the Internet thus appeared to be a challenging and relevant task, enabling us to make a modest contribution in a new and important field of research. Given the opportunity to do an empirical study in the South partly sponsored by Computer Mediated Communication (MCMC) at Roskilde University Centre a project started to develop.

The main aim of this project is to shed light to the actual use of the Internet in relation to the democratisation process in Namibia. The choice fell on Namibia for several reasons. One being that Namibia is considered to be number three on an African scale with Internet access. This made Namibia a good case, as it indicates that the Internet is actually being used there, though it should be mentioned that a Danish development worker warned us, that the Internet status of Namibia could be reviewed in one single afternoon! Nevertheless we did not take his comment too seriously, because we assumed that his main interest was not centred around ICTs such as the Internet, but he made us reflect on the matter, and several emails were written to contacts in Namibia asking them about how much and to what extend etc. The answers we got via email sustained our choice about Namibia as our case. Furthermore to us Namibia was also an interesting case, as it is a young democracy with a long history of foreign rule. Apart from that it came to our knowledge that the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), with the head quarter situated in the Namibian capital Windhoek, could be of interest to us as users of the Internet in relation to democratisation processes. MISA lead our attention to the media field, and as a second important field in relation to democracy the education field was chosen. The choice of media and educational institutions reflects our view, that in order to strengthen a young democracy it is fundamental to empower institutions that are key actors in empowering the population.

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<sup>5</sup> With the exception of surveys conducted on the rather unique use of the Internet in South Africa, ad. Heeks 1999

In the end we turned out to be quite a strong team, with the common subject of communication, development studies and educational studies respectively, busy collecting empirical data in the search for the answers to our problem definition.

## 1.2 Problem-definition

*How is Internet used in selected sectors in Namibia and how does this conduce to empower the institutions? And can this usage within the institutions contribute to empower people in Namibia, seen in relation to a democratisation process?*

- **In the educational sector we concentrate on reasons for and consequences of the use of the Internet - within and among the educational institutions.**
  
- **In the media sector we concentrate on information down-loaded from the Internet and spread via the Internet and/or other communication channels - and if this information could possibly conduce to empowering people in their political awareness in Namibia.**

## 1.3 Explanation of concepts

Use: The term "use" refers to several levels of understanding.

*For the media sector* the **first part** of the problem definition is seen in relation to a descriptive perception of the word and later a more analytical perception of the word. The descriptive side of it entails empirical data on the amount of time spent on the Internet, the web pages visited, the way it is used in the media products etc. Thus it is a description of information exchanges. The more analytical side refers to interpretations of how the actual use is being useful or not. This part is thus concerned with the empowerment gained from using the Internet as a tool within the institutions and from the information exchanges through the Internet. **Part two** of the problem-definition is generally reflected upon analytically and more related to communication-processes. How the institutions use the information in a societal context and what results and consequences that may have in a democratic Namibia.

*For the educational sector* "use" is partly understood as in the media sector but also as a rather comprehensive concept, which tells how the mere presence of the Internet is being used to influence existing social structures.

Empowerment: In this project the notion **empowerment** refers to expanding human choices and possibilities through the processes of transforming information gained directly or

indirectly from the use of the Internet into valuable knowledge. **Direct use** of the Internet refers to the process of using the Internet as a tool i.e. for example lecturers, librarians and media-workers collecting information on the Internet. **The indirect use** refers to people getting mediated information from direct users. Thus the direct users are passing the information and/or knowledge gained from this information on to students, staff, readers, listeners etc.

Democracy: In this project we partly focus on a "**Bottom up model**" of a democratisation process in which expansion of human choices is a prerequisite - empowerment of the people. In a democracy we find it crucial that the population has access to information and thereby has the possibility to participate in their democratic society. On the other hand it has been close to impossible for us not to also focus on a "**Top down model**" since the only institutions that have Internet access are rather elitist. Leading us to, for us to be able to say anything about the Internet in relation to Namibian society it has been necessary to analyse how the growing "elite" gives access to, uses and disseminates information from the Internet and if so, for what purposes. Thus, in relation to democracy we focus on how and if information is made available not only to a minority of the Namibian population.

Sectors: The problem definition refers to two sectors of vital importance in strengthening a democratisation process. **The educational sector**, which is said to have an important role for the individual ability to understand and participate in the society, and **The media sector** which is of interest as it can possibly mediate information gained through the Internet to the wider public.

## **1.4 Delimitation**

In this project the Internet is highlighted as the main object of investigation in relation to empowerment and democracy. We are aware that **empowerment** is a wide-ranging notion, and that empowerment thus can be obtained through several interrelated processes. Our focus is centred around empowering processes seen in the light of the Internet as a communication tool and access to a large amount of information - within the educational and the media sector.

We consider **reception analysis** a valuable tool in analysing how people understand information found on the Internet, yet we chose to give priority to a broader scope of investigation as opposed to the more time consuming in-depth analysis required in reception analysis. Though, reconsidering the design of our investigation and our following analysis, it would have been interesting and also important to elaborate our survey with reception and text analysis and thereby more profoundly be able to clarify actual needs, possibilities and

consequences arising with the Internet. Nevertheless due to time-limits reception analysis lies beyond the focus of our investigation just as elaborate **text analysis** of the material found on the Internet does.

The whole complex of **economic growth** and economic development within a democratic state could also have been analysed, and it would seem quite obvious to do that, but considering other parties' huge interest in this field we have chosen to focus more on social development. Nevertheless as things are interrelated, the question of material and human resources within the two sectors has been touched upon as well.

Leaving us to, this project is an analysis of how **access to communication** and actual **information exchanges** conduce to empower or dis-empower institutions and citizens in Namibia's democratisation process. Including several theoretical reflections as well as our own point of views.

## **1.5 Approach and Methodology**

The collection of data has been separated into three phases:

First phase: Collection of data and literature in search for a relatively broad understanding of the Internet seen in relation to democracy.

Second phase: Collection of empirical data in Namibia.

Third phase: Collection of additional information and literature required to analyse on and to improve our understanding of the actual empirical findings.

### **The first and the third phase**

In the **first phase** we focused mainly on the literature provided by acknowledged development organisations such as the UNDP. The optimistic visions about the Internet put forward by this literature inspired us and influenced the research design of the project. But apart from this literature we also read critical literature and soon we developed a more critical understanding of the miracles of the Internet seen in relation to improving democratisation processes in the South. Furthermore we read literature on democracy, and widely discussed the ideal functions of the media and education in relation to empowering the population. **The third phase** of this project has primarily been used to analyse and systematise our empirical findings. This has to some extent led to additional research, especially through resources on the Internet, as that was the best place to find the recent reports about the issue.

### **Collection of empirical data - the second phase**

The second phase was primarily centred on the qualitative method of collecting empirical data, using a semi-structured questionnaire in qualitative interviews. Thus during our two and a half weeks stay in Namibia, 34 interviews were conducted within the respective sectors, but also with informative sources outside the sectors, who held important knowledge about the Internet-situation in general. Enclosure A gives a complete description of, who we interviewed, their institution, profession, nationality, ethnicity and age. The interviews are stored on cassettes that can be required from us if needed. During our report we refer to the interviews in our foot-notes i.e. Interview with Bryan/KCR time code 200 side A. Time code refers to the time code obtained when the tape is played at a tape recorder.

### **The questionnaire**

The interviews were carried out according to a **semi-structured questionnaire**<sup>6</sup>, produced collectively prior to the first interviews. We chose the **qualitative method** due to its strength in reaching a subject-related frame of understanding and in enabling surprises to occur during the collection of the empirical data. The pre-constructed ideas and impressions of the research field gradually faded as confronted with the empirical reality and this led to a lot of new insight and some adjustments of the question guide along the way. The questionnaire contains two parts:

- The first part of the questionnaire focuses on the **institution, staff and objectives**. This mainly to give us a general understanding of the entered establishment. Apart from that it focus on the **amount of computers, Internet accessibility and the actual use at an institutional level**. The information gained is valuable as it enables us to construct a framework within which the analysis of the use in its broader sense can be unfolded. Furthermore the answers are an important source of information leading to the overall impression of the actual use of the Internet within the chosen sectors in Namibia.
- The second part of the questionnaire aims at collecting information on the interviewees' **interpretation of the Internet use**. In this part we try to capture the interpretations of the **values and constraints** in using the Internet at the personal and institutional level, as well as in relation to a democratic society as a whole. The emphasis put on the different levels of society differs according to the role of the interviewee, i.e. as a user, a key person or an expert. It also depends on the interviewees' interpretations of the importance of the Internet in relation to the different levels.

In the light of the above it is important to mention, that due to the variety of institutions and also the great difference between the sectors, certain parts of the questionnaire has been

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<sup>6</sup> See enclosure B

given higher priority in some institutions than in others. This naturally lead to different answers and different results and thus it has been necessary for us to elaborate our problem-definition with a specific focus related to the two sectors respectively.

### **Selection of institutions and interviewees**

Our criteria for selecting the institutions<sup>7</sup> were: Institutions within the media and education sectors, that at least theoretically serve a vital function in empowering the public and that these institutions had an Internet connection.

#### Educational field

Additional criteria: that the institution does not by nature exclude the less wealthy groups in society, like private schools with high fees etc. After getting an overview of the IT situation at a glance, we chose the following cases to represent the educational sector concerning IT:

- 1) University of Namibia (UNAM)
- 2) Pan Hofi Secondary School
- 3) Insect-thon/School-Net project
- 4) Public Access (UNESCO, MISA and American Cultural Centre)

#### Media field

Additional criteria to the above-mentioned: That the institutions should not be government owned, due to considerations concerning the vital role of a Free Press in relation to democratisation processes. This unfortunately excludes the television media in our research, as the only national television station (Namibian Broadcast Corporation) is government owned. Apart from that, interviews with commercial radio stations were carried out, but the findings of the Internet use was of a very minimal character, thus we have chosen to leave them out.

As alternative media institutions we have chosen to focus on:

- 1) The NGO, Media Institute of Southern Africa (described in analysis of Media part one)
- 2) The NGO, Katutura Community Radio and (described in analysis of Media part one)

As formal media-institutions we have chosen to focus on:

- 1) The national daily newspaper The Namibian in English and a small part in Oshiwambo
- 2) The national daily newspaper Die Republikein in Afrikaans and
- 3) A smaller daily newspaper Allgemeine Zeitung in German

These were chosen because the media is generally considered of great importance in

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<sup>7</sup> See enclosure A

educating and informing the people and thereby empowering the population, and all the above mentioned media can play an important role as mediators between the government and the public.

### **The interviewees**

Within each institution one or more persons were interviewed, depending on the size of the institution and the extension of Internet use within the institution. In addition we have interviewed local experts. The interviewees can be divided into three categories, depending on the position from which they speak:

Experts: i.e. specialised persons within the Internet field and/or the education and media field in Namibia who have supplied us with general information about the field and who have also given us perspectives on various discussions within the field.

Key persons: i.e. interviewees in key positions related to the Internet, as representatives speaking on behalf of their institutions. The majority of our interviewees can be categorised as key persons and they will be introduced in the analysis and more profoundly in enclosure A.

Users: i.e. interviewees interviewed about their own use and interpretations, and thereby speaking on behalf of themselves only. This group mainly consists of students at UNAM and users interviewed at the Internet Cafés.

It is important to notice that due to the two-fold nature of our questionnaire (as described above) many of the interviewees take different positions within the interview situation. This particularly in relation to the key persons, as they to various degrees switch to the user-position during the interviews.

### **Observations**

As an additional method we have systematically used the possibility of observing and experiencing the actual settings in which the Internet is used. All of the interviews have been carried out within the institutions or at the place of access. We have thereby visited all the institutions and points of access presented in this report<sup>8</sup>, through which we have gained a lot of insight in the surrounding environments. Furthermore our stay in Namibia has brought along a deeper understanding of the general context of Internet use in Namibia. Important observations are thus included in the report.

### **Using the Internet for research**

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<sup>8</sup> With the exception of the telephone interviews with radios and some primary schools

Before, during and after our stay in Namibia we have used the Internet to search for literature of relevance to our project. Additionally we have used the Internet more specifically to make systematic investigations on Namibian web pages, in order to get an idea of who is presented on the **www** and what kind of information is provided nationally. Before our interviews we have studied the websites, if any, of the institutions. Some web pages have been used on a regular basis, as The Namibian's web page through which we kept ourselves up to date on local news. Furthermore we have all participated in Namibian **chat-rooms** to get idea of what is happening there. Last but not least we have attended an **international on-line conference** about the Internet and educational development. All in all, the Internet has been used quite a lot and has been an important tool in our research.

### **Constraints in collecting empirical data**

It gives certain implications to collect empirical data in a rather different environment. Furthermore neither interviewer nor interviewee speaks **English** as the mother tongue. We are aware that this gives certain barriers in the communication process, which have possibly led to some misunderstandings. Furthermore being **white** in a post-apartheid state some self-reflections and uncomfortable situations evoked. The power balance in the interview situations has not always been as equal as wanted, and thus increased the risk of interviewees trying to please the interviewer. Some places we experienced a kind of promotion speech and soon had to realise that the interviewees expected us to bring along donor money. We tried to minimise those elements by performing the interviews in the interviewees' daily environment and make clear to them our purpose and intentions before the interview started.

The design of the questionnaire has led to some methodological problems, as the first part of the questions is used to collect rather quantitative data. To some extent using a qualitative research method to collect rather descriptive data, leads to some problems in relation to the validity of the information presented. Naturally the interviewee can only present his or hers personal understanding of the situation, and the answers should thus be read as the interpretation of the interviewees. Within the selected institutions written material on the Internet accessibility and use have been collected and used to various degrees.

## **1.6 Analysis and theory**

(ikke færdigt)

The analyses of the two sectors differ according to the different focus described after the problem formulation. The chosen sectors are different in nature thus their use of the Internet seen in relation to democracy has as mentioned forced us to treat the two sectors in different manners - still working according to the same overall problem definition.

Since this project is about how the Internet is used in the Media and Educational sectors and

how this relates to Namibia's democratisation process, our analysis<sup>9</sup> follows the same structure, thus we have divided our analyses into two main parts:

- The first part concentrates on how the use of Internet empowers the selected institutions within the two sectors
- The second part of the analysis is focused on how Internet used in the sectors can conduce to empower the Namibian citizens in a democratisation process.

Our choice of theory is divided in different categories:

- Literature about the Internet/ICT in a Southern context such as UNDP, PANOS Media Briefing, Morales - Gomez and Melesse, Holderness and Jones
- Literature on democracy in general such as Gitonga
- Literature on democracy and ICT such as Kakabadse and Benjamin in Heeks
- Literature on education and society such as Callewaert and Dewey
- Literature on democracy and media such as Ronning

Apart from the above-mentioned literature, we have used and refer to quite an extended amount of secondary literature.

## 1.7 Readers Guide

To give the reader a broader understanding of the structure and the aim of this project, the following should function as a guide to clarify our framework and procedures leading us to our conclusion.

**Chapter two:** Internet, should contribute to a further understanding of the three overall approaches to the Internet we have chosen to focus on. Furthermore it rises some discussions which we will use in our analysis of the two sectors. **Chapter three:** Democracy, should conduce to readers reflections about the term in general but also give reader and idea of what we consider key-ingredients in a democracy. Thus this chapter should create a frame inside which we reflect, discuss and elaborate on our empirical findings in relation to the Internet use in democratisation processes. Apart from this, chapter three also functions as a presentation of the present government in Namibia, SWAPO and of the roles and constraints of our selected sectors within a democracy - elaborated on by entering possibilities of the Internet. **Chapter four:** Namibia, should give the reader a possibility to understand the national context in which we have analysed Internet use and to some degree an overview of the Internet infrastructure in the country. **Chapter five** is the 2-part divided analysis of the

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<sup>9</sup> A further explanation will be given immediately in front of each analyses

educational sector's use of the Internet and how this refers to the institutions and the Namibian society. And **chapter six** is the 2-part divided analysis of the media sector's use of the Internet and how this refers to the institutions and the Namibian society. Both analyses draw on the theory presented in chapters two and three. Finally we have an overall **conclusion** on the sectors' Internet use giving the reader the answers to our problem definition, leading us to further **perspectives** on the issues in question.

## **2. The Internet**

The main purpose of this chapter is to outline different approaches to the use of the Internet and important debates. After the introduction, important positions within the development field in relation to perceptions of the use of the Internet are outlined. The third part of this chapter is a brief introduction of the main issues of the current debates.

### **2.1 Introduction**

Early discussions focused on the new features of the Internet as a communication medium, and its possible impacts on our cultures.<sup>10</sup> The opinions in the cultural field were divided. The critical approach, called to attention the time taken away from face to face communication, the loss of personality, the possible risk of addiction etc.<sup>11</sup> But the focus of discussion was mainly on the Internet's ability to enable new communication communities across earlier boundaries of ethnicity, gender, nationality etc. On the Internet communication with your neighbour as compared to communication with a person across the globe makes very little difference in expense and convenience. An expected consequence of this is that communication communities form around different notions than that of physical location. Holderness refers to the possible change as: "*ideography replaces geography*"<sup>12</sup> referring to the replacement of common interests over physical location in the creation and maintenance of communities on the Internet. These were dominant thoughts in the early years where the growth of the Internet was dominantly financed by education and research budgets, mainly in USA. Since then,

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<sup>10</sup> Holderness 1998

<sup>11</sup> Jones 19xx, p.7

<sup>12</sup> Holderness 1998, p.36

means of financing the growth of the Internet has been sought by making money out of the Internet. According to Holderness, this has changed the emphasis of the use of the Internet from talk to trade, as the " ... men in suits hit the net" .<sup>13</sup>

It is not a new phenomenon to talk about revolutions in relation to mediums of communication that relies on technology. This can for example be recalled from early debates of the role of the television. And, as with the television, the Internet revolution has divided opinions in two contradicting directions, representing the optimists' and the pessimists' visions respectively. Within those approaches there is a tendency to focus on the Internet as a transmitter of knowledge and values, for the better or for the worse.

## 2.2 Approaches to the use of the Internet

### The optimistic approach

Today the predominant approach to the Internet is, that it is a tremendous force in promoting development understood as a linear process of progress, i.e. the discourse lies within the modernisation development theories. Within this approach communication is viewed as a transmission and transportation of knowledge, and focus is put on how much we communicate or "get across" most efficiently, economically and rapidly. This approach is dominating the thinking in the field of development studies, and leads to focus of the Internet's features such as: *"Compared with most traditional tools for development, information and communications technologies can reach many more people, go geographically deeper, work faster and at lower cost."*<sup>14</sup> Within this approach there is, though to various degrees, a reliance on advances within technology as the cure of all social illnesses. In line with this approach and with an economic focus the notion of "information superhighway" has arisen, referring to " (...) *the ongoing project of constructing the transportation infrastructure to maintain " progress" in industry.*"<sup>15</sup> Within the

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<sup>13</sup> Holderness 1998, p.36

<sup>14</sup> UNDP human development report 1999, p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> Jones 19xx-blue bunch, p.7

large development organisations such as UNDP and the World Bank, a dominant view is that the Internet can bridge the gap between the North and the South through the dissemination of information, if only the Internet is made available to the South. Thus the focus on building infrastructure etc.<sup>16</sup>

The focus is thus that of promoting the free flow of information, thereby diminishing the barriers to modernisation. The barriers of the free flow of information in the South can be summarised as: resistance within governments, lack of skills and human resources, lack of infrastructure, and lack of finance. Furthermore training and adaptability through education should promote an information rich and hungry society.

What is demanded to overcome those barriers is basically availability of funds and loans, education of some individuals, adaptability, and above all change in perception among political leaders towards the impact of the Internet.<sup>17</sup>

### **The approach of the South**

A growing voice is calling to attention other aspects of the use of the Internet. At the Information Society and Development Conference (ISAD), 30 countries from the South chose to put the emphasis on the Internet's abilities in a more social perspective. According to those the ICT should be used to "*...meet basic needs, support sustainable socio-economic development, respecting the diversity of language and culture, and providing universal access and service.*"<sup>18</sup> With South Africa in the forefront the expression "information community" was presented. As the South African position paper from the ISAD explains: "*... The vision of an information community (therefore) takes into account the undoubted potential of communities at various levels to co-operate, to bridge differences, to work for mutual up-liftment and for the meeting of basic needs, and to redress the social imbalances of under-development The development of an information community perspective aims to ensure that the information revolution benefits society as a whole.*"<sup>19</sup>

This reasoning reflects the point of equality prior to or simultaneous with economic growth, as opposed to the above-mentioned developmental approach of unequal growth, which is expected to benefit society as a whole in a longer perspective. This approach of the South takes into consideration, aspects of what could be termed as the critical approach in relation to the use of the Internet.

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<sup>16</sup> UNDP 1999, WB www xxx

<sup>17</sup> Coeur de Roy 1997

<sup>18</sup> As quoted in Heeks 1999 p.197

### **The critical approach**

The critical approach points at the dangers associated with the hasty introduction of the Internet in the South from a socio-economic and cultural perspective. This approach draws on critical writings (Marxist and/or dependency theories) within the field of social science, and interprets the Internet as a transmitter of values, consumer habits etc. from the North to the South. A process perceived as not leading to the better. Representatives from this approach consider the application and use of the Internet from a point of view of access, control, content and equity factors in a given social setting.

Morales- Gómez and Melesse agree to some potentials of the Internet in promoting political development. But they stress that the premises for this to happen are that the Internet provides access to relevant information, and that it is assimilated, understood and used as intended.<sup>20</sup> Within the critical camp emphasis is put on the necessity of creating political strategies based on studies revealing the implications of the implementation of the Internet in the South in general and specifically within societies - prior to the implementation of the Internet.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.3 Important points of discussion**

### **The have and the have-nots**

The question of access is addressed from a global as well as a national level. From a global perspective the shares of Internet access are highly unevenly distributed in demographic terms, with North America alone accounting for more than 50 % of the Internet users. Additionally, income, education, sex, age, ethnicity and language are important factors in the use of the Internet.<sup>22</sup> To the critical camp such figures indicate that the Internet functions in accordance with existing lines of wealth distribution and social exclusion. Arguments put forward are:

*“Under these conditions, ICTs risk benefiting only a fraction of the population in the higher income strata, with higher levels of education, and with attitudes that favour modern societal options over traditional practices. If the macro elements that create social inequalities are not taken into consideration in the introduction and use of ICTs as tools for development, new gaps between the have and the have-nots of information are likely to emerge within societies.”<sup>23</sup>*

The debate of the have and the have-nots is growing, and polarising questions are whether this problem can be solved by implementing more Internet connectivity in the South, or

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<sup>19</sup> As quoted in Heeks 1999 p. 197

<sup>20</sup> Morales - Gómez and Melesse 1998

<sup>21</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998

<sup>22</sup> UNDP 1999 p.62-63

whether aspects such as wealth distribution, tradition and culture will further polarise the societies in the South.

### **The question of free information flows**

The main objective in the process of connecting the South to the Internet is the exchange of information. One issue of big concern is government resistance towards the Internet. The Internet is by some governments and individuals in the South viewed as a possible provider of information that can offend the culture. As de Cour describes:

*“This means that some elements of information related to the culture of some countries might offend either the religious or political agenda of some governments and be unacceptable for individuals themselves. Such an environment generates a type of resistance towards this new information and communication technology.”*<sup>24</sup> This openness of the Internet has led to government regulations, which is of big concern to international organisations and NGOs. UNDP puts it this way:

*“Several countries, however, have attempted to censor and control this popular empowerment. Some monitor Web searches and have blocked access to sites providing foreign news or airing political criticism. Others have even made use of the Internet a punishable crime.”*<sup>25</sup> The solution to this problem is in training and consultation, and much effort has been put in convincing governments and other decision-makers about the benefits of the Internet.

The critical camp basically agrees, but approach the question rather differently. Control with information flows is understood as representing power. Within some political structures the flow of information is thus viewed as a serious threat to the stability of the state. Under such circumstances regulative measures to limit the information flows can be taken, such as in the case of China, Vietnam and Singapore. Another or additional reaction to the Internet is that of reluctance to privatisation of, and thereby loss of control with, basic communication. This kind of regulation is viewed as a barrier of empowering a democracy through the Internet.<sup>26</sup>

### **The question of resources and priorities**

Investment in the Internet is a rather large-scale investment for the countries in the South. Not only is investment in Internet connectivity required, a lot of investments in infrastructure and technological items are needed as well. 80% of the world's population lack minimally efficient telecommunication facilities, the majority of those being in Africa and South East Asia. More than 40 of the world's poorest countries -35 of them in Africa- have a tele-density of less than 1 to 100. Furthermore, surveys reveal that the cost of telephone, computers and fax is between five to ten times higher in developing countries than in the

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<sup>23</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998, p.5

<sup>24</sup> De Cour 1997, p. 889

<sup>25</sup> UNDP 1999, p.61

<sup>26</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998, p.8

industrial world.<sup>27</sup> In several African countries average monthly Internet connection and use cost run as high as \$100, compared with \$ 10 in the US.<sup>28</sup> The optimistic field find investments in the Internet valuable long term investments, or even consider Internet a necessity to the South.<sup>29</sup> But critical voices call attention to the question of how governments should prioritise scarce financial resources. Often the choice is between areas like health, education and other social services and ICTs. Thus critical voices hold that basic needs should be met prior to that of high technology investments.<sup>30</sup>

### **The issue of culture**

There is general consensus that technology can not be considered a value free tool. As Morales- Gómez and Melesse point out: “*It (technology red.) has been developed within a specific social, cultural and economic context which it carries with it when transferred into a new setting.*”<sup>31</sup> Most technology and additionally most of the web-pages on www have been developed in the industrialised countries. Thus this leads to a considerably transfer of values and opinions from the North to the South. To modernisation theoretics this transfer of values from the North to the South is a much welcome mean to break down barriers to modernisation. Be it as transfer of technical knowledge, of political ideas or of economic ideology. Within this camp the major concern is the fact that 80% of the web-pages are in English, as only 1 out of 10 persons world wide speak English, i.e. the language is a barrier of entrance to a great majority of the global population.<sup>32</sup>

A major concern in the critical field is that the poor majority of the world are left as solely receivers, and not as senders, of information. The information available on the Internet has predominately been shaped in Western countries, and carries information, products, values and attitudes made in those countries. This leads to worries concerning consumer habits and the cultural identity in the South.<sup>33</sup>

## **3. Democracy**

This chapter should give the reader an understanding of the complexity of the concept democracy and clarify what we find interesting in relation to our problem definition and at the same time, it should give the reader an understanding of why the Internet is interesting in relation to empowering people in Namibia's democratisation process.

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<sup>27</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998, p.6

<sup>28</sup> UNDP 1999 p.62

<sup>29</sup> See ad the UNDP statement at the preface

<sup>30</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998)

<sup>31</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998 p.8)

<sup>32</sup> UNDP 1999 p.62

<sup>33</sup> Morales- Gómez and Melesse 1998

### 3.1 Democracy, an abstract notion

The word democracy derives from Western thinking, more specifically from ancient Greece. It is a combined concept that has two words incorporated *demos* and *kratein*, which respectively mean the people and to rule.<sup>34</sup> This has been elaborated throughout time with an extra *for the people*, so in contemporary and ideal terms democracy is referred to as:

***"Rule by the people of the people for the people."***<sup>35</sup>

Democracy should thus serve numerous contrasting interests by bringing them into debate and decision-procedures. With peoples' democratic participation it could **enhance autonomy** and in doing so democracy is stated to be the best form of government for **political equity**. In brief, democracy is considered to serve welfare, autonomy, equity and agreement and it tends to diffuse power.<sup>36</sup> Democratisation has therefore been referred to as fundamental to reform or reinvent government. In **democracies with high legitimacy** it can be looked upon as a process of improving the quality of the existing democracy and in other countries it can be seen as a process of introducing or strengthening democratic procedures, eventually leading to **"good governance"**.<sup>37</sup>

Talking democratisation processes it is important to bear in mind that the concept of democracy is understood, perceived and exercised in numerous ways.

*"In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed definition but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides Ψ. The defenders of any kind of regime claim that it is a democracy Ψ."*<sup>38</sup>

We find that the rather abstract concept of democracy should be referred to as **dynamic**. Meaning that a democracy is always transforming and cannot be looked upon as something static. All democratic societies whether North or South are in a constant evolution interrelated with the surrounding world and the spirits of the people within the respective democratic society. This leaves us with the question, if it could be that there are as many types of democracy as there are definitions. Not intending to define it in absolute terms, it is easier to define **what is not a democracy**<sup>39</sup> than what is a democracy, there are some generally agreed key-ingredients that should be in place to form a **representative democracy**. Some of the key-ingredients could be: A ratified Constitution, A tri-partition of power: The Legislative, The Judicial and the Executive, preferably a Multiparty system, Free

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<sup>34</sup> Kakabadse in Heeks 1999

<sup>35</sup> Abraham Lincoln in Gitonga et al 1988, p. 10

<sup>36</sup> Kakabadse in Heeks 1999, p. 211

<sup>37</sup> Kakabadse in Heeks 1999, p. 212

<sup>38</sup> Orwell, G. Selected essays, Baltimore, 1957, p. 149

<sup>39</sup> I.e. Fundamentalist regimes in for example Iran and Saudi Arabia (Martinussen, 1994, p. 233)

elections, Personal security to the law, Freedom of speech and Freedom of assembly and institutions working according to the law.<sup>40</sup>

These above-mentioned key-ingredients of a representative democracy also lies close to our understanding of the concept democracy, though we have in this project chosen to focus on social empowerment/dis-empowerment of the people living in a dynamic Namibian democracy.

### **3.2 Namibia's government - SWAPO**

The sitting government in Namibia today is South-West Africa Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO). In 1989 the implementation of United Nations resolution 435 for free and fair elections resulted in SWAPO coming to power. After 106 years of foreign rule, Namibia achieved independence and installed Sam Nujoma as President.<sup>41</sup> Namibia is a republic divided in 13 administrative divisions. The Country is ruled by a multi-party Parliament and has a democratic constitution, which was ratified in 1989.<sup>42</sup> The Constitution is drafted by SWAPO in collaboration with a Constituent Assembly and is considered one of the most liberal and democratic Constitutions in Africa<sup>43</sup>. Some of the keywords after independence are national reconciliation, education for all and working towards a "mixed" economy.

As mentioned a democratic system has its roots in the people and not in an alien government imposed and forced on the people. Thus we consider Namibia's democracy a real democracy, as SWAPO has been voted into governance by a majority of the population and rests on a democratic constitution, but still in a process of cementating the corner stones. Considering that democratic or undemocratic is a matter of degrees and that between the two extremes the reality is a continuum along which can be situated all the varieties of social, political and economic systems.<sup>44</sup>

In trying to define democracy in Namibia one of our interviewees explains:

*"There is a whole lot of issues surrounding this, and you will find that the great democracies of the world, developed over centuries, they did not just fall out of the sky Ψ and I think Namibia will go through many more crisis and many more upheavals. But as long as people stay committed to this basic idea, that we have a set of laws that people should abide by and a set of values and norms, amongst others the freedom of the individual, freedom of expression, freedom of speech and freedom to elect your representative. If we stick to those, I*

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<sup>40</sup> Gitonga et al 1988

<sup>41</sup> General Information on Namibia 1999.

<sup>42</sup> CIA 1999.

<sup>43</sup> Bauer 1998.

<sup>44</sup> Gitonga et al 1988, p. 7

*think we will do just fine.*"<sup>45</sup> This interpretation of democracy lies close to ours, but another interviewee puts it in perspective by saying: "*Democracy in Namibia is divided in two groups, the majority don't understand what democracy is, they don't understand that the word government is themselves, to them government is something up there*"<sup>46</sup>. Added to this, the same person explains: "*They are born SWAPO*"<sup>47</sup>, and you probably can't be anything else unless you want to be perceived as being disloyal to your tribe, and many people will not want to look like they are disloyal to their own tribe ... it is the whole tribal issue of African politics ... we tend to support a tribe rather than political ideologies."<sup>48</sup>

This tells us that Namibia's society is in a democratisation process and even though SWAPO is trying to democratise the country, by for example decentralising power to the regions, there is still a long way to go before the majority of the population would refer to themselves as democratic citizens.

During the past ten years SWAPO has had to face some heavy tasks. Even though the per capita GDP is relatively high in comparison to that of other African countries, the majority of Namibia's people still live in pronounced poverty due to great inequality of income distribution and a large share of wealth going to foreigners. The distribution of wealth is not only unevenly distributed between people but also between different regions, and for example this summer of 1999 a revolt was fought down in the Caprivi region in the North East. The Caprivi crisis had its roots in social discontent and the objective for the Caprivi tribe, was to obtain independence from Namibia.<sup>49</sup>

### 3.3 Knowledge and information in a democratisation process

Analysing Internet use in Namibia in the light of a democratisation process it is inevitable not to consider the above-mentioned inequality. Inequality cannot only be seen in relation to land and resources but must, as mentioned be reflected upon in relation to access to knowledge and information. **Knowledge and information** are very important to citizens in a democratic society since some of the cornerstones of democracy are to be found in the values, beliefs and attitudes of the people.<sup>50</sup>

Added to this, democratic behaviour is not a genetically conditioned, inborn or inherited ability - Democracy is learned.<sup>51</sup> Among other institutions<sup>52</sup> the **educational field** plays an important role, referring to acquired knowledge about what is, what is good, what is bad,

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Jörn Scaby from the newspaper The Namibian, timecode 294

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Venna from American Cultural Center, timecode ...

<sup>47</sup> Most SWAPO politicians and members come from the Oshiwambo-tribe, which makes up around 50% of the Namibian population. (CIA 1999)

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Venna from American Cultural Center, timecode ...

<sup>49</sup> Conversation with Helge Schutz and people from the Danish NGO Ibis.

<sup>50</sup> Gitonga et al 1988, p. 22

<sup>51</sup> Gitonga et al 1988, p. 22

<sup>52</sup> Another very important institution could be "The Family".

what is useful and what is useless, what to do when, and how? Education is fundamental to how people behave and conduct in society and it is partly through education that individuals and groups learn to recognise, accept and respect established social institutions and practices.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from some kind of fundamental basis for understanding democracy one could say that once the organs of government are in place and their mode of operation is specified, it is necessary that some **mechanism of control** is established. This control mechanism should ensure that the peoples' will is implemented and that it is indeed the peoples' government working according to the peoples' wishes. Citonga explains: *"Like all control mechanisms, this one rests on a system of information generation, storage, transmission and dissemination. It rests on all the means that allow people to know what the various organs of government are doing and thus enabling them to decide what to do about it"*.<sup>54</sup> The so-called control mechanism Citonga is referring to should thus extend peoples' choices and empower them to make more reflected political decisions in the formation of their democratic society. Among others this control-mechanism rests with **media-institutions**.<sup>55</sup>

### **Sub conclusion**

Within a democracy it is very important that the people have knowledge about their society and access to information about that society. This could empower them to reflect on the decisions made by their government and also if motivated to participate in the political debate. Thus it might give them a feeling of belonging to the society.

But what does this all have to do with the Internet?

## **3.4 Democracy and the Internet**

The following section focus on the political dimension of utilising the Internet as a tool in strengthening democracy.

By expanding human beings' choices, human beings' scopes of action are also expanded. Seen in the light of the importance of having the right to be consulted and having a sense of belonging in a society are crucial and interrelated aspects.<sup>56</sup> In this context the right to **participate in the political debate** and **liberty of association** is of great importance. As mentioned participation enables citizens to obtain a feeling of belonging to a society i.e. a sense of being part of a democratic society and the liberty of association enables collective

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<sup>53</sup> Gitonga et al 1988, p. 21

<sup>54</sup> Gitonga et al 1988, p. 14

<sup>55</sup> Other important institutions could be: The Ombudsman, local and foreign NGO's etc.

<sup>56</sup> UNDP 1998

action to expand. Thus empowering people and organisations to have influence in the political debate are crucial in a democratisation process.

Knowledge and information is needed in order to **participate in political debates**. As a source to information in general the role of the Internet is considered crucial, since the Internet provides access to enormous amounts of information ranging from international expertise and on-going debates, to networks on specific topics, databases etc.<sup>57</sup> Various theories point out, that the information from the Internet can empower people and lead to more reflected political decisions made by the population. As UNDP points out: *“Communications technology opens new opportunities for small players to enter the ... political arena”*.<sup>58</sup>

Apart from that the Internet is generally believed to strengthen democracy by spreading democratic ideas to the South, and thereby raise political awareness and expectations from citizens to their governments.<sup>59</sup> We find that this might be true, but in a Namibian perspective with so few users of the Internet, it is crucial that the ones with access i.e. the institutions are well-functioning and working according to democratic ideals of some kind of equality and added to this include the citizens, for this to have any influence on the wider population.

UNDP finds that at a national level, governments are important information providers in relation to democracy. Central and local governments can provide the public with relevant information through the Internet, and thus increase the transparency of government actions. This might also be true, but again in Namibia most of the web-sites are not concerned with democratic ideals to empower the people in making more reflected political decisions, and the government site is dominantly aimed at foreigners. So for the Internet to have any influence on the populations political awareness, it is up to the people with access to the net to use it for this purpose. Bearing in mind that: *“Information is only one of many needs. Email is no substitute for vaccines, and satellites cannot provide clean water. High-profile technology projects risk overshadowing basic priorities.”*<sup>60</sup>

### **3.5 The role of education in society**

#### **The school and the society**

The society has the school it deserves - is a common sentence when problems about the educational system are debated. The question is whether the school is a product of the society or the society is a product of the school. One could argue that it would probably be both, as the people leaving the educational system will either attempt to change it, be convinced to

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<sup>57</sup> UNDP 1999

<sup>58</sup> UNDP 1999 (<http://www.undp.org/hdro/report.html#stats>), New Technologies (...), p.3.

<sup>59</sup> Morales-Gómez 1998, p.5-7

<sup>60</sup> UNDP 1999 (<http://www.undp.org/hdro/report.html#stats>), New Technologies (...), p.3

keep it or do not have an opinion at all. If the schools are state owned the state is in power of the schools; the state develops regulations, provisions and purposes of the schools. It decides what kind of education is provided and in that sense the educational system in a country will in theory reflect the ideas of the people in power. The state and the educational sector are thereby closely interrelated and can be seen as social and historical constructions, changing through time and due to the influence of different kind of regimes. The Educational sector has through the history been a factor of great attention as an important sector in developmental processes. To put emphasis on the educational sector can be seen as an 'investment in the human being'. This investment does not directly result in financial profit, but is more concerned about human development.<sup>61</sup>

### **More than just a school**

The functions of the school as covering institutionalised learning processes can in a critical approach be described with words like a place of **repository ("keeping"), qualification, selection, socialisation and disciplination**<sup>62</sup> - based on who is in power within a society.

A place of repository, the keeping function: The educational sector can be seen as a place where people are kept busy and under control until they are needed to fill in a role in the society. As long as they are in the school they are not making any riots or planning a revolution without the state (the school) knowing about it. To place the people in education could seem to be an expensive procedure - on the other side it could be much more costly not knowing what the people were up to.

Qualification: Through education people are being qualified to be active citizens in a society. In basic education learning to read and write is important as these skills are required to open the doors to a broader knowledge and thereby qualification at a higher level. The pedagogical debate is often about which aspect of qualification should be given highest priority: A **general** education is seen as crucial for people to enable them to take part in the society, also education should provide skills to work and thereby fill in a **specific** place to serve their community. In Namibia there is often a difference between the qualification taught in school and the qualifications needed in the communities. One of the reasons is that the entire concept of 'school' as an institution separated from the daily life in the family is an idea elaborated and realised in the Western world.<sup>63</sup> Without any real redefinition of the content of the school the South has taken in the concept. The implementation of IT in some schools will create new qualifications - though it is doubtful whether these qualifications will match the needed skills in the communities.

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<sup>61</sup> Myrdal, 1976

<sup>62</sup> Aasen, 1992

<sup>63</sup> Callawaert, Nord/Syd, nr. 16, 1999

Socialisation: Can be seen as a way to internalise and accept the school, its hierarchy and what is taught there - an indirect acceptance of society and how to live according to common values and rules. The educational sector can thereby serve as an important actor in preserving the values and the institutions in the society - and/or as an actor of change. The socialisation taken place in the educational system is thereby a preparation for a future society that is uncertain will ever come.<sup>64</sup>

In Namibia during apartheid people were socialised to accept the existing patterns through very limited education, today independence has added another function: to socialise to democracy. This change creates difficulties for many people affected. Three student teachers express that it is very difficult to be critical in the new system when their past experiences with education have been influenced a great deal by "spoon feeding" practices.<sup>65</sup>

Selection: The function of selection concerns the division of the participants. Examinations and marks are tools to divide the bright students from the slower learners - and to reinforce the competencies and qualifications being honoured in the society. The ones who are capable of passing through the system will come out with a certificate, others will not. The unspoken rules are also effective regulators: if you do not know how to behave, when to talk and what to say you will also be eliminated. By implementing IT in schools even more selective procedures can evoke. The ones who are able to use it will raise their possibility to pass through the system while the ones incapable will drop out or maybe fail their examinations.

### **Education for democracy**

The words of wisdom - *"You can put a man through school, but you can't make him learn"*<sup>66</sup> is crucial for the planning and structure of the activities in the educational sector to be conducive to the understanding of democracy. How to teach democracy to make people *want* to learn is the big task. Roger Walters has one suggestion: *"Democratic education aims to develop real democracy through active participation by all those involved in classrooms and educational institutions. In democratic education students have the power to make decisions about their learning, because power is shared rather than appropriated in advance by a minority of people."*<sup>67</sup>

In democratic societies the general education should be pointed towards a participation in the democratic processes in the society. The educational system can be seen as a key player in the further development and the preservation of the democracy as the educational sector should encourage and influence ways of actions, ways of thinking and ways of living.

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<sup>64</sup> Callawaert, Nord/Syd, nr. 16, 1999

<sup>65</sup> Jesper Olsson Kristensen, Nord/Syd, nr. 11 1997

<sup>66</sup> Ben Harper, 1995, "Fight for your mind", no.8

(NOTE) The common perception that information is power demands that traditional literacy can be defined not only just as the ability to read and write, but extended to the possession of certain background knowledge without which the act of reading becomes meaningless.<sup>68</sup> If people do not think of democracy they will probably not influence the democratisation process effectively. The educational system should therefore be planned in such a way as to encourage critical distance towards political information, a sense of ones decisions and actions and an understanding of responsibilities more than rights in a democratic society. (NOTE) To be able to live and take part in a democracy it is important that the democracy is not just something to learn about in school, it has to be lived - and thereby practised in the school.

### **UNESCO, education and IT**

UNESCO believes that education has the power to create a more peaceful and democratic world, being a requisite for democratisation.<sup>69</sup> Convinced about the prospects of the new information and communication technology concerning the dissemination of knowledge, they are at the same time aware of the dangers related to IT: *“The most accurate, up-to-date information can be made available to anyone, anywhere in the world. Let us not forget, however, that a very large underprivileged population remains excluded from these developments.”*<sup>70</sup>

*“It will not just be a matter of spreading new knowledge to everyone, but of ensuring immediate access to information and knowledge for everyone, and especially for students, researchers and scholars of all countries.”*<sup>71</sup>

### **Internet and democratic education**

The enormous amount of attention and resources devoted to the use of IT in education on a world-wide level tends to distract from other really important problems and issues that need to be addressed - effective learning and good teaching. IT will provide extraordinary access to information but only for those who understand the process of information seeking. Computer literacy is as profound as the ability to read because it requires a range of abstract understandings about how information is accessed, managed and manipulated.<sup>72</sup> These understandings therefore have to be realised before the ability to use computers will be of

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<sup>67</sup> Education for democracy:

[http://www.gn.apc.org/peacepledge/ed/pe\\_democratic.html](http://www.gn.apc.org/peacepledge/ed/pe_democratic.html)

<sup>68</sup> Kakabadse in Heeks, 1999 (Information technology's impact on the quality of democracy)

<sup>69</sup> UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/50y/brochure>

<sup>70</sup> Jacques Delors, Learning: The treasure within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission, UNESCO 1996

<sup>71</sup> UNESCO,

<http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/50y/brochure/promotin/194.htm> - 4

<sup>72</sup> Kakabadse in Heeks, 1999

real value in a democratic context - if the access to all sorts of information is called 'democratic'.

In the first step towards an interested and informed population Internet can play a role by providing more access to government, more information and education about various issues and with the extended knowledge perhaps more motivation to participate. But if IT should be of any relevance in a democratic society it should be seen as a helpful tool to the people who already have the interest for the information - and the need.<sup>73</sup> Whether IT will be the tool to awake people's minds and encourage them to participate more in the democratic debate is an open question.

*"All the freedom given to them, the political freedom and the responsibility and demands democracy brings tend to exhaust people."*<sup>74</sup> If people do not feel an intense need for it, the freedom to seek information on the Internet can be of more trouble for the individual than good. The expansion of choices rather leading to confusion and resignation can result in the potentials of the Internet to be used in less exhausting ways: Chat, emails and entertainment.

In many countries the school stands in great opposition to the social life outside the school. In Namibia the language spoken in the school is one example. English is a language most children meet for the first time at school - even if English is the national language - and many of them will not speak it again when they leave. The language on the Internet is predominantly English and will in that sense already have limited the number of pupils in rural areas without language support from home to use the Internet. As with Internet also the so-called "democratic skills" on the agenda in schools will often stay a part of the school culture and not affect the life outside the institution. The same is seen with radical students who demonstrate in their universities but do not seem eager to go to the villages and the slum in their communities to teach and organise the poor and thereby share their knowledge with the less privileged.<sup>75</sup> The assumption that education on that level is still seen as a privilege and not as a right cause, that to become a member of the coming educated elite seem to be more important than to help the poor communities.

### **Democracy, education and Namibia**

The democratic Namibia was supposed to be a total clash with the former apartheid era. In terms of transforming the educational system, the policymakers recognised that education had been part of the politics of exclusion and oppression and that in order to change the imbalances in the society, education had to play an important role. The then minister of education published a policy statement saying: *"(...) the ministry is prepared to develop an educational system which will play a central role in the change of society. To teach*

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<sup>73</sup> UNDP 1999, p.62

<sup>74</sup> Dewey 1948, p.21

<sup>75</sup> Ulighted og Underudvikling, Myrdal, p.49

*democracy involve us to be democratic and by being democratic we can expand the access to education, secure equality and higher the quality of our educational system.*" <sup>76</sup>

An ideological shift had to occur in the way Namibians saw education in the society. Unfortunately there was only a small number of Namibians who ever had the possibility to broaden their perspective beyond the traditional educational practices and thereby live out the new objectives, partly because of the isolation during the apartheid era.<sup>77</sup> *"In the old system we were not taught to think critical, we did not reflect about the existing system. It could not be different. Many people have problems to adjust themselves to the new conditions and last but not least to understanding it even after seven years of independence,"* a teacher says.

Equal access to education - an education that previously had been serving the then existing elite - was in focus after independence. Among the population the access to what was before inaccessible was seen as the big change, where the new goals and objectives with education were more difficult to digest. The goals for the new educational system was to qualify and socialise a new generation of citizens, not to the present society but to a future society.<sup>78</sup> Therefore new subjects and teaching methods were implemented in the schools inspired and helped by international 'knowhow'. *"To strengthen the democracy in Namibia it is important that the people are able to participate in the public debate. Students in Life Science (new subject, red.) are encouraged to develop critical thinking and skills in communication"* <sup>79</sup> The new education system was not directly a result of a need expressed by the population but more a decision made by the government. A change in attitude towards education and democracy was to be developed when more and more of the population could undergo such a 'democratic education'. The new policies are probably planned with the best intentions, but are still difficult to implement among a population where 70 % live in rural areas with only limited access to education. Real changes are difficult to make when old hierarchies and structures are still in place, the inequality, which is still present in the educational sector, will be elaborated on in our analysis of the educational sector.

The word democracy is continuously repeated in papers from the Ministry of Education and the interrelatedness between democracy and the people that makes it possible.

*"democracy..be not simply a set of lessons in our schools but rather a central purpose of our education at all levels (..) our learners must also understand that they can not simply receive democracy from those who rule their society. Instead, they must build, nurture and protect it.*

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<sup>76</sup> Jesper Olsson Kristensen, Nord/Syd no. 11, 1997

<sup>77</sup> Patti Swarts, Nord/Syd no.16,1999

<sup>78</sup> Peder Johannesen, Nord7Syd no.12, 1988

<sup>79</sup> Pattu Swats, Nord/ Syd no.16, 1999

*And they must learn they can never take it for granted. "*<sup>80</sup>

The price of change is one of testing, making mistakes and building skills and confidence in people who only know the old way. Namibia has a progressive Ministry with many farfetched goals that will not happen overnight, as the educational sector has just started to find its place in society. New subjects, new methods, education for all, education for democracy and now also Internet represents a transformation to a new society that for the many need some time to be understood and accepted.

### **3.6 The role of the Media in a democracy interrelated with the Internet**

Currently public access to the Internet is extremely limited in the South. Thus one could argue that media become central in mediating information provided by the Internet onto the wider public. According to UNDP the media industry is spreading opinion, culture and politics in societies, and thereby they play an important role in a democratisation process<sup>81</sup>. The following should give the reader a clearer picture of the role of the media in a democratic society and how the Internet could interrelate with that.

To readers information, the theoretic Ronning writes on reflections about the media in a Southern African democracy, but he does not write about the Internet in this relation. Thus all the considerations about how the Internet interacts in this context are theories constructed by us, based on our knowledge, reflections and findings. Furthermore, seen in the light of our problem definition, the entertainment role of the media is not profoundly commented on.

*"A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."*<sup>82</sup>

The role of the media is something that has been debated throughout time and theories range from totalitarian theories to direct public access theories. Within the last decade the focus of the debate in Southern Africa has increasingly been that of the role of the media in relation to democratisation processes<sup>83</sup> and added to this, the core of attention is questions regarding freedom of expression. Some of the central questions have been: What constitutes an independent press and what is the relationship between the government and the media?<sup>84</sup>

#### **Independent and free media**

Independent media could be referred to as **critical and elaborate media exchanging ideas**

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<sup>80</sup> Education for all, p.24

<sup>81</sup> UNDP 1999

<sup>82</sup> James Madison, quotation in "Democracy Dialogue" 1998, frontpage

<sup>83</sup> Ronning 1994

**and information** between different people and interest-groups and the government. As Citonga states above, a kind of control-mechanism within a democratic society, which has led to various denominations of the media as "watchdogs" or even as a 4th estate. The fall of one-party regimes has tended to increase the demands for such independent media as mediators in democratisation processes in Southern Africa. Thus democratisation processes and the shape of the media institutions are interrelated within a dynamic political system. This leads to questioning where the society is heading and with which aims? As Namibia is working towards reconciliation and a mixed economy, the state control and ownership also of the media institutions is partly revoked.<sup>85</sup> As Ronning points out, there seems to be a **relationship between the liberty of the market and the liberty of the media**, and he finds that too little focus has been put on the role of the market in relation to the media. This lack of focus has led to a situation where too little attention has been paid to a discussion of the media in relation to citizens' rights.

This is important because many African critiques of the government-controlled media have argued that a free press can only come into existence by introducing market forces.<sup>86</sup> But if solemnly profit-orientated owners buy up the media institutions, or international commercial media conglomerates, where does that leave the population in relation to the ideal of the media in promoting free exchange of ideas and opinions and empowering people to participate in local politics. In the light of this there are three recognised crises of the media in Africa, **the crisis of power, the crisis of ownership and the crisis of resources**.

### **Power and ownership**

**Weak states** are very sensitive to the media in relation to their ability to spread dissent within the population. By focusing mainly on peoples rights than on their responsibilities, but also in relation to the media's possible severe critique of the government. Therefore several governments have put up measures to **control** the media. I.e. by demanding journalists to give up sources on demand from above<sup>87</sup> or by withdrawing great advertising potentials from the institutions by simply not using them for ads from government-owned companies. These measures are in sharp contrast to democracies with strong legitimacy, where political and social cohesion is upheld through consensus-building processes<sup>88</sup>.

Looking at the potentials of the **Internet as a tool for media-workers** it has not made it easier for governments to control the media. The Internet on one hand can supply media-workers with new ideas and better arguments towards the government in the media-products aimed at the public. On the other hand, the Internet can connect media institutions in the South with media institutions in the North and thereby spread critical messages to the world.

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<sup>84</sup> Ronning 1994, p.1

<sup>85</sup> Eventhough the government still sits tight on national television and one bi-weekly newspaper "New Era"

<sup>86</sup> Ronning 1994

<sup>87</sup> Which has recently happened in Namibia - Interview with Raasheid Galant from the NGO MISA.

<sup>88</sup> Ronning 1994, p. 4

This could lead to other foreign governments putting pressure on local government. Apart from that the Internet can also connect media institutions in the region, which is happening in SADC, and thus contribute to a synergy and solidarity between them, which give them a stronger position in their respective societies.

### **Information-rich and information-poor**

In revealing to the public what the government does, media in Southern Africa are weak due to their very **low penetration rate** in the society. As in Namibia the majority cannot afford to be regular media users<sup>89</sup>, the infrastructure is unsatisfactory and on top of this in the majority of the population there is lack of education and knowledge about society in general. In other words if the information reach the population, the average citizen often has a rather limited capacity to making sense of the information. Therefore the media could often be referred to as **elite media** which have the ability to make use of various information channels such as the Internet and consequently command knowledge and power which again is associated with the influence over the media. Thus, even if the media are working according to democratic ideals of equality and public service, the **gap** between the information-poor and the information-rich could still widen.<sup>90</sup> Seen in this context this is one of the core problematics in the debates about the Internet. The Internet can with its huge amount of available information supply the already information-rich with even more information and the information-poor will thus be **relatively more poor**. In this respect it is important that other institutions such as schools and NGOs are well functioning, working for the public, and also have access to the information on the Internet.

### **Constitutional rights?**

In Southern Africa some of the above-mentioned power relations have led to calls for the necessary institutionalisation of the freedom of expression and as stated in the Windhoek declaration<sup>91</sup> number 9: "*African states should be encouraged to provide constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press and freedom of association*". This recognition of the media is very important in a democratic society and the Namibian constitution also embraces this in its article 21 §1, which says: "*All persons shall have the right to: a) freedom of speech and expression, which shall include **freedom of the press and other media** ... e) **freedom of association** which shall include freedom to form and join associations or unions, including trade unions and political parties.*"<sup>92</sup>

But as the article also says, the **freedoms are subject to the law** and it is possible to restrict the rights in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of Namibia, national security,

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<sup>89</sup> Interview with Venna from American Cultural Center, timecode ...

<sup>90</sup> Ronning 1994, p. 9

<sup>91</sup> The Windhoek declaration was adopted by all SADC heads of states, UNESCO and UN General assembly in 1991

public order, decency or morality. I.e. it is up to the Judicial to interpret if one of these have been violated, and if nepotism is thriving the Judicial will often collaborate closely with the government, and thus the democratic ideals are threatened. Leading us to that there are circumstances in which the **freedom of expression of some conflicts with the freedom of expression of others.**<sup>93</sup>

In relation to the paragraph above, the question of pros and cons of the Internet is rather complex. At an international level, information spread via the net from the country about an unjust trial could lead to consequences; Such as other governments questioning the legitimacy of the democracy in the country or even sanctioning or restricting the country's international scope of action.

At a national level media institutions could start debates with other institutions or citizens on their respective web-sites and thus contribute to reflections on the matter. Keeping in mind that only few media institutions have web-sites and only a minority of the population has access. Nevertheless the spill-over communicative effect could contribute to other institutions spreading the information. But again, the way the matter is presented to the public is crucial. If for example the media present the case as severe critique of the government it could lead to public disorder, which might have been what the government was trying to prevent in the first place when suppressing a person's or institution's freedom of speech.

### **Dependent media**

Due to a reasonably small media sector and **lack of infrastructure** the media has little ability to present their case to the public in times of crises. Professional organisations are often weak and even when the media is owned by indigenous business ventures these are often **undercapitalised** and dependent on the government's decisions in relation to access to foreign currency for investment in machinery, equipment, technology and material for production. Thus due to a weak financial basis media are often unable to withstand onslaughts in the form of legal or economic attacks.<sup>94</sup> In this aspect the government could make it hard for the media-institutions to obtain the necessary hardware and software needed for access to the Internet, simply by assessing large taxes on imported hardware and software from abroad. This would mean that the media-institutions would have to be financially strong to be able to afford these "luxuries". But, referring to the infrastructure of the media, the Internet could be a good investment as it could widen the institutions' scope of action and thus bearing in mind and stressing all the prerequisites, lead to a better-informed public.

### **Alternative media**

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<sup>92</sup> The Namibian Constitution

<sup>93</sup> Ronning 1994

<sup>94</sup> Ronning 1994, p. 4.

Alternative media institutions<sup>95</sup> could possibly **outweigh lack of information** to the public from the formal media institutions, bearing in mind that also alternative media depend on ownership-structures and are often economically weak or very dependent on donor funding from foreign sources. This makes them vulnerable both to shifts in donor policies and economic and political changes which they have no possibilities of controlling.

Many of the alternative media in Southern Africa are often linked to a mixture of well organised and more loose organised institutions and they often express feelings or structures associated with a wide range of groups and cultures who are not catered for through the main market media. The debates that take place within these institutions are often **more in touch with the people** and it is often through these institutions, the debates later make their way to more mainstream and commercial media<sup>96</sup>. Examples of such alternative media in Namibia could be MISA and Katutura Community Radio that are quite well functioning NGO's. These institutions tell us something about where Namibia is at in their democratisation process because, as Ronning states there seems to be a connection between market society, relatively extended civil society and media with a high degree of openness and freedom. But in this context, one of the many prerequisites for these institutions/NGOs to emerge apart from the "*freedom of association*" is a developed social and communicative infrastructure<sup>97</sup>. In relation to the empowerment of civil society by supporting local initiatives, the **donor world** has as mentioned often played a big role. I.e. by supplying the NGO's with media outlets as for example money for printing magazines and papers, radio antennas for transmitting and also Internet access for information resources. Thus the majority of the alternative media often depend on their donors and in several cases it is questionable if they are financially sustainable without donor funding. For these media NGOs the Internet can become very important, not only for information resources and as communication channels to other media, but also because it gives them possibility to communicate fast, effectively and cheaply with their donors. This will be elaborated on in our analysis.

## **Resources**

The problems in relation to resources are relevant to all levels of the media. Not only infrastructure and material resources are crucial but also the competence of the media personnel. The professionalism of the products often cannot compete with international products, which is especially seen in relation to television-programs, but also in relation to Western news-agencies' products. This **lack of journalistic competence** and self-assurance does not only conduce to a **poor public service** it also makes the press more susceptible to

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<sup>95</sup> Such as Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in Namibia, which will be elaborated on in our analysis.

<sup>96</sup> Ronning 1994

<sup>97</sup> Ronning 1994

pressure from the government.<sup>98</sup> I.e. as Ronning points out, the poor training which many journalists in Southern Africa have received could pertain to various forms of **self-censorship** and local journalism could risk falling back on "*ministerial speech reporting*", meaning that institutionalised norms could lead to citizens not getting the information relevant for them in a democratic society. Bearing in mind that individuals are "**situated interpreters**" and not all-knowing subjects, and that communicative practices such as the structures of the media set agendas, constrain possible meanings and possibly shape some of what individuals think about and discuss<sup>99</sup>.

Ronning also states that the journalists' internalised assumptions of what is expected from them and self-imposed regulations emanating from real or imagined threats lead to simpler forms of journalism, thus the role of the media in a democracy as true "watchdogs" is rather questionable. This whole aspect of lack of training and human resources is very relevant in relation to the Internet. The Internet could possibly play a positive role in for example on-line education of the journalists. It could also give inspiration to journalists about how to present critique constructively towards the government and as mentioned lead to new and better arguments. On the other hand, the Internet could conduce to **further deterioration of the media** content if different texts are simply copied directly from the source and not recontextualised or edited and not even reflected upon in relation to the populations' needs. Seen in the light of the working conditions<sup>100</sup> of journalists today this could easily happen.

#### **Subconclusion:**

In a democratic society media must give the public access to information and analyses which enable them to know and exercise their civil rights. Citizens must also have access to information and debates about political decisions made by the government to be able to influence these through new debates and representations. And last but not least, citizens must be able to recognise their situation and experiences in the medias' representations of their lives and circumstances. For the media to meet these demands a lot of constraints have to be considered and as for the role of the Internet it can conduce to both positive and negative results.

## **4. Namibia**

### **4.1 Welcome to the country of the Brave**

This chapter should give the reader a more profound understanding of the context in which our empirical studies took place. Furthermore it elaborates on the technological infrastructure of the country and thus some basic prerequisites for being able to connect to the Internet. It

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<sup>98</sup> Ronning 1994

<sup>99</sup> Ronning 1994, p. 8

also introduces some of the complexities within the Namibian society, which we find necessary to consider when analysing the use of the Internet in relation to a democratisation process.

Namibia is a coastal country situated Northwest of South Africa, bordering Angola, Zambia and Botswana. It is a vast desert country and with its 824 000 km<sup>2</sup> it is approximately 20 times the size of Denmark. This should be reflected on in relation to an understanding of the difficulties in establishing and maintaining infrastructure.

The number of inhabitants is an estimated 1.648.270 people with the population divided into 13 ethnic groups<sup>101</sup>. The blacks count for 86%, mixed 7,4% and whites 6,6%<sup>102</sup> Namibia is a country of many languages and often people speak more than one. English is the official language and Afrikaans and German is also widely spoken. Besides these three languages, the majority of the population speaks different indigenous languages. On the Internet the English language is the most dominant, thus understanding and speaking English is one of the prerequisites to be able to understand and make use of a majority of the information supplied.

Namibia's economy is based on mining, fishing, tourism and agriculture of which tourism is the fastest-expanding industry, and a majority of the sites to be found searching the Internet for information about Namibia are related to this sector.

Approximately 70% of the country's population are enrolled in the agricultural sector<sup>103</sup> and most of these people live in remote or rather isolated areas. The agricultural sector predominantly has a subsistence character and it is necessary for Namibia to import a considerable amount of its food from South Africa. The subsistence farmers, who make up the majority of the population, are obviously not the ones who directly benefit from the Internet at the moment. And from our observations, the great inequality in Namibia is such a great barrier to the Internet use, that we even at moments considered our survey absurd. Added to this the unemployment rate in the country is 30% to 40% including underemployment.<sup>104</sup>

Life expectancy at birth is 42 years (CIA 1999) and at the moment it is estimated that one out of five is HIV positive or has AIDS. Since it is still a big taboo between the citizens to talk about HIV and AIDS it is a problem of great concern. Among others one of our findings in Namibia made us aware how the Internet is used in this relation. Specific information on AIDS, and how to inform citizens about it had been collected from the Internet and

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<sup>100</sup> The role of the journalist as : " ... *throwing out a net over time and space to catch the relevant events - both big fish and small fish, but new fish every day*" (our translation) Tuchman in Drotner et al 1998, p. 320

<sup>101</sup> About 50% of the population belong to the Ovambo tribe, Kavango 9%, Herero 7%, Damara 7%, Nama 5%, Caprivian 4%, Bushmen 3%, Basters 2% and the Tswanas 0,5% (CIA 1999).

<sup>102</sup> World factbook, CIA 1999.

<sup>103</sup> General Information 1999

<sup>104</sup> 1997 est. World factbook, CIA 1999

disseminated via radio.

### **A country of contrasts**

Quite subjectively, central Windhoek looks like a suburb to Los Angeles with wide roads and pick-up trucks. The pastel tained shopping-malls and the tall modern corporate buildings mingle with a variety of franchise restaurants i.e. Kentucky fried Chicken and quite a selection of fancy shops offering everything from the latest European fashion to rustic hunting-lodge furniture. Asking people where to find the local "African market" could seem just as absurd as asking where to find an Internet cafe. Even though many are not able to understand the word Internet the difference is that the Internet cafe exists, the market does not.<sup>105</sup>

To get in contact with what probably most Europeans would consider the "real Africa" it is necessary to go to the outskirts of Windhoek to neighbourhoods like Katutura and Ko-mestahl, where the blacks and coloureds live. Here most of the roads are gravel roads, and quite a number of houses are tin-shacks on small fenced-in lots. The feeling in these neighbourhoods is remarkably different from that in central Windhoek. There are no whites and the public spaces are full of people selling things, day-labourers waiting to get hired, alcoholics hanging out and children playing in the streets etc. The ways in which people are separated in their ethnic communities are obvious leftovers from a very recent Apartheid-regime. In the Apartheid period wealth was distributed extremely unevenly between the people and the consequences are striking. At the moment Namibia is experiencing serious "back-wash-effects"<sup>106</sup> in the light of their history and their new "mixed economy". Thus Namibia is a country of dualism where a growing elite have most of the advantages, for example use of the Internet.

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<sup>105</sup> Observations from empirical study.

<sup>106</sup> Back-wash-effects are considered to be negative effects of development-processes, where certain sectors are given priority as opposed to others. This has in several cases led to subventions, and big investments in the industrial sector on behalf of the agricultural sector thus creating extensive urbanisation, where people flee the rural areas looking for new possibilities in the cities. Not finding what they looked for, they are left in unemployment and poverty in big suburban slum or ghetto areas. (Myrdal 1970)

## 4.2 Namibia and the Internet

### Introduction

The history of Internet in Namibia started around 1990. The initiators in pushing for implementation of Internet in Namibia were The Data Systems and Services unit of the office of the prime minister (DSS) and the Namibian Internet Development Foundation (NAMIDEF, among others supported by UNICEF<sup>107</sup>). DSS and NAMIDEF collaborated in supporting government and academic networking in the country. In 1999, there are around 1000 hosts in Namibia. Compared to other African countries, that is quite a high number.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless compared to the North connections are few, and a further development of Internet access strongly depends on, apart from having access to electricity, the telecommunication infrastructure in the country.

### Telecom Namibia

In Namibia, the state owned company Telecom controls and maintains the telephone lines and the company is at the same time the sole telecommunication provider apart from the mobile telephone providers in the country. Before independence in 1990 telecommunication and postal services were part of the same company controlled and owned by the South African government. Investments in the telecommunication infrastructure were given low priority and only few resources were spent on developing and expanding.<sup>109</sup> After independence the Postal Service and Telecom are still government owned but now function as separate units. This is accordance with the decentralisation of the national economy which is part of SWAPO's program.

### Commercialisation

Telecom Namibia's monopoly will not last though. Pressure from the World Trade Organisation<sup>110</sup> is perhaps one of the reasons that the government is planning to open up the market for other providers<sup>111</sup>. For now plans are that the market will be fully opened at the latest in 2004. Until that the government's visions for the next 3 to 4 years are:

1. Access to telecommunications services for 80 to 90% of the Namibian citizens.
2. In each community with more than 100 people, there should be at least one telephone connection or business centre.

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<sup>107</sup> Information from: <http://www3.wn.apc.org/africa/namibia>

<sup>108</sup> **Host:** Technically, a host is a computer that has users who access network services through it. In common usage, a host is a computer connected to the Internet, information from: <http://www.mids.org/mapsale/world/index.html>

<sup>109</sup> Interview with F. Tjombe – timecode 020 to 030 side A.

<sup>110</sup> The World Trade Organisation (WTO), established on 1 January 1995, is the legal and institutional foundation of the multilateral trading system. It provides the principal contractual obligations determining how governments frame and implement domestic trade legislation and regulations. It is the platform on which trade relations among countries evolve through collective debate, negotiation and adjudication.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with F. Tjombe, timecode 165

3. Each telephone connection should have the capacity of accessing the information society.
4. Each business centre should be equipped to provide access to the information society, be it Internet or similar.<sup>112</sup>

As a state owned company Mr. F. Tjombe believes that Telecom is obliged to move into the rural areas and provide telephone and Internet access to the citizens there. The decentralisation of Telecom, which now consists in 70 centres throughout the country, can be seen as a move in that direction. Telecom has experienced a demand for telephones and even for Internet access in the rural areas.<sup>113</sup> The demand for telephones is still seen as a more basic need though.<sup>114</sup> The people expressing a need for the Internet, is a relatively small and very differentiated group. I.e. people who commute and work in other parts of the country want it to communicate with their families. Bushmen have expressed a need due to their co-operation with Greenpeace, and other rural communities have demanded it for communication, business and educational purposes.<sup>115</sup>

At present Telecom are preparing themselves for the competition which will come when privatisation is a reality. For that reason they plan to become Internet Service Providers (ISP) in hope of surviving in the battlefield.<sup>116</sup> The reason for commercialising the telecommunication sector and to introduce competition is to increase the selection of products and improve the services, efficiency and quality. The expectations are that when the private sector moves in, they will supply capital and speed up the investments. These privatisation-plans are however also problematic. Mr. Tjombe puts it this way:

*“If you look at the society of Namibia then you will find that we have people (..) living in clusters (..) then obviously it is very difficult for any operator to provide services to these people - it is economically not viable. So therefor we think (...) when outside operators come in they will just concentrate on Windhoek, Walvis Bay and those areas. And they will take away our corporate customers, the most lucrative customers that we have right now ... and we need that income to go into these villages .... That is why when it comes to issues of privatisation the government is not so sure whether the time is correct. But they have put up dates ... it is 2004 or they can even make it earlier in 2002. So we are sort of making ourselves ready and we hope we can get another two years. Then I think we will be able to say: Okay, let's compete now, with whoever is coming!”<sup>117</sup>*

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<sup>112</sup> Telecommunications policy and regulatory framework for Namibia 1999., p. 6

<sup>113</sup> Interview with F. Tjombe, timecode: 423 side A

<sup>114</sup> Interview with F. Tjombe, timecode: 008 side B

<sup>115</sup> Interview with F. Tjombe, timecode: 272 side A

<sup>116</sup> Interview with F. Tjombe, timecode: 001 side A

<sup>117</sup> Interview with F. Tjombe, timecode 252

This is one of the major tasks for Namibian Telecom in the future. If the private new-comers are only concerned with moneymaking what are then the options for the marginalized groups living in the rural areas and how does this influence the Internet accessibility?

### **The Internet providers**

In Namibia there are 5 different Internet Service Providers at present.<sup>118</sup> A rough estimate of the subscribers in Namibia is 10,000 and the amount of subscribers is increasing. At the same time some of the ISPs offer discounts to schools and NGOs.

Our expectations to why these discounts were offered did not tally with reality. How naive it may seem we thought discounts were offered due to ideological reasons, but we found that discounts were offered simply to get a bigger share of the market.<sup>119</sup>

Some of the Internet Service Providers are also providing direct access to the Internet i.e. they have web-cafes at their business locations. **(her kommer mere til om Public-access)**

### **Namibia online – for who?**

When you search the net for ‘Namibia’ and use various search engines the result is almost always the same. As mentioned tourism sites draw the picture almost everywhere.<sup>120</sup> This supports the opinion that the reason for Namibia to get on the Internet is mainly to obtain economic growth. A look at the governmental site suggests that the information is dominantly aimed at foreigners interested one way or another in the country<sup>121</sup>. As the President points out in his presentation of the country on the site:

*“Namibia is a free country, open to the world. Foreign firms are welcome. My government offers them the keys to success in Namibia: a free trade zone, fiscal advantages, state aid for job creation, and skilled workers. The services of the Namibian government remain entirely at your disposition for further research and information.*

*Do not hesitate to contact them. You will find the necessary addresses and phone numbers at this site. And, above all, come see us in Namibia. I would like to extend a personal invitation to you to come see for yourself the splendour of Namibia. I know that my people will be delighted to welcome you and I think you will be enchanted by their warmth and hospitality.”<sup>122</sup>*

Apart from The Presidents presentation the site contains information about relevant ministries to foreign investors, a few big companies, banks, airlines, hotels and Namibian trade representatives and commissions. It is quite obvious that the site does not cater for local people interested in domestic affairs or for foreigners interested in elaborate societal facts

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with Chad Megenis, not taped

<sup>119</sup> Interview with I-Africa, timecode: 541

<sup>120</sup> We have used these search engines:

<sup>121</sup> Look at the site: <http://www.republicofnamibia.com/index.html>

and figures, i.e. information about literacy rate, national expenditure on import of electricity and healthcare.<sup>123</sup>

### 4.3 The Government strategies

The reason for us including this chapter is that in relation to democracy we find it rather interesting, how the government handles the whole issue of ICT and also how their strategies could influence on the population's possibilities in the future. The Namibian government's interest in the ICT field is outwardly not that noticeable. A visit in the government buildings showed that ICT is still far from present in their daily work.

An inquiry about papers for government strategies on the ICT field resulted in confusion and employees not knowing where to look, and maybe not even what to look for. Nevertheless we were able to obtain papers from a recent ICT-workshop NICI (National Information and Communication Infrastructure).

Due to criticism from other politicians in the SADC region and pressure from Internet advocates the government is starting to open up for serious discussions about the developmental possibilities within ICT.<sup>124</sup> In spring 1998 the first NICI -workshop was launched initiated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with financial support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

One and a half year later the follow up workshop was held, aiming to establish an Information and Communication network consisting of Namibian stakeholders, the government, the private sector, the media and academicians. The participants called attention to the constraints blocking for further development of a Namibian ICT infrastructure. The problems discussed at the workshop resulted in the above-mentioned paper submitted to the Namibian Cabinet for consideration. The proposals are divided in 3 groups involving different constraints:

Education: The question about education moves on two different levels. The first constraint is the insufficient culture of reading in general. The other problem is the one of computer illiteracy. The lack of well educated people in the ICT field and the absence of trainers and teachers in ICT disciplines cause a slow spreading of ICT usage. Infrastructure: The inadequate utilities and infrastructure in the rural areas are blocking for implementation of ICT there. Facilities: Lack of centres and libraries with updated resources. There are no or very few places for teachers and researchers to improve their subjects. Lack of initiatives and financial resources, which are necessary parameters for establishing multipurpose community centres. These centres have high priority and are explained as:

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<sup>122</sup>Quotation from: <http://www.republicofnamibia.com/index.html>

<sup>123</sup> Information from: <http://www.republicofnamibia.com/index.html>

<sup>124</sup> Conversation with Helge Schutz/The Namibian (not taped)

MPCCs equipped with telephones, facsimile machines, radios, televisions, videos and computers with multimedia capacity would give communities access to a wealth of information on their specific needs and would also allow them to find global markets for their products. It will furthermore enhance healthcare and education and numerous other applications such as tele-food and tele-medicine in the different communities. <sup>125</sup>

To solve and be able to embrace the challenges above, the participants of the workshop came up with some of the following suggestions: The low level of computer literacy in Namibia could be addressed through the introduction of computer-science as a compulsory subject at primary school-level.<sup>126</sup> And the human resources and financial implications should be investigated as soon as possible. The government should have an ICT policy for Namibia in place by 2001. This policy should be based on a survey on existing community-needs and national development priorities. Apart from that a facility-central to store outdated computer equipment from the private and public sectors to be recycled in schools and community centres, should be established. The participants suggested that the Community centres are given high priority and that the centres should be build on existing infrastructure available in the specific area and use local needs as their guidelines.

In the light of the recent NICI workshop representatives of a Task Force are nominated and the group's aim is to draft a terms of reference to the National Information and Communication Resources Network at the latest by March 2000.<sup>127</sup> Besides, the government itself must develop specific guidelines about government websites taking into account culture, gender and language issues.

### **Sub-conclusion**

Looking into the government papers and strategies in the ICT field it is more than likely that Namibia has compared it self to South Africa that has quite extensive legislation in this area. South Africa has focused a lot on the so-called Tele-centres/multipurpose community centres.<sup>128</sup> In relation to democracy and access to knowledge the priority given to the MPCCs stresses that the government is trying to benefit more than a few citizens and also that they find these MPCCs valuable in a development process.

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<sup>125</sup> Papers from Ministry of Information and Broadcasting - Recommendations of the NICI follow-up workshop 28-29 September 1999 p.4.

<sup>126</sup> SchoolNet which is a project aiming at connecting all primary schools to the Internet, it is a frontrunner in this direction. SchoolNet is mentioned in our analysis.

<sup>127</sup> Papers from Ministry of Information and Broadcasting - Recommendations of the NICI follow-up workshop 28-29 September 1999 p.2

<sup>128</sup> Benjamin in Heeks 1999, p 199

Another reflection could be the very ambitious intentions and goals. Taking into consideration the societal constellation mentioned earlier in this chapter, we find it problematic for Namibia to reach the aimed level in two or three years. Do they have sufficient financial resources to for example develop the needed infrastructure, do they have the necessary support from the citizens and do the majority of these citizens have a need for this?

No matter what, even though basic needs such as land, water and housing have been at the top of the priority-list until recently, Namibia is now in an awakening phase where they have started to pay serious attention to questions of ICT. The issues of water and land are still urgent and calling for attention, but now yet another issue has been added to the list.

## **5. Education, Internet - and Namibia**

Most schools in Namibia are not acquainted with Internet, often only the privileged former “white” schools seem to have access.<sup>129</sup> In our search for Internet in Namibia many of our efforts were in vain, our institutions were therefore easily selected as these are the places that actually have Internet access and make use of it one way or the other:

- University of Namibia (UNAM) - Lecturer, librarians, students, administration
- Pan Hofi -The principal, Mr. Andima
- School Net, Insect Thon - Initiator Joris Komen
- Public access (UNESCO, MISA, American Cultural Centre) - people in charge + users

### **Strategy from above?**

At the Ministry of Higher Education we asked about strategies and policies for the implementation of Internet in the educational structure: “(..) *we agree on the importance of Internet in teaching..as access to learning. We need a valid policy for the whole sector and this is the stage where we are, currently.*”<sup>130</sup> As no such policy has been conducted at this time, implementation of Internet is solely depending on the priorities in each school itself - and the ability to attract donor money. “*If you are a good leader you see the potential of Internet, you are the head, you set up a network, set up Internet, you can even set up rules! Schools are semi-autonomous.*”<sup>131</sup> Internet is being seen as good and the decentralisation of power to the schools is being used to explain the lack of policy in the area. If a headmaster supports implementing Internet, he can do it without asking anybody from the government, which is seen as an aspect of freedom for the individual, freedom to use the resources available and to do whatever he feels like. Still the freedom is depending on the government as not all free choices are considered even – to implement Internet is considered better than not doing it. It is understood between the lines, that a distinction of schools is made: schools

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<sup>129</sup> Interview with Victoria, timecode 246

<sup>130</sup> Interview with official in Ministry of Higher Education, timecode 001

<sup>131</sup> Ministry of higher...timecode 130

with good leaders who understands the importance of Internet and schools with bad leaders who has not understood the importance, yet. The good leaders - in the educational field will solve the problem with Internet themselves. The “bad” leaders need help to see the relevance of Internet, but as long as they do not request any initiatives there is no haste for the Ministry to add this issue to the long list of awaiting problems in the educational sector.

Many schools lack the basics and Internet might still be seen as a luxury and not a priority for the time being is concluded at the Ministry of Higher Education. “*You want to give us computers, why don’t you give us books?*”<sup>132</sup> - is the expected reaction from the schools if a policy was to be implemented at this stage. When asked about the future of Internet in the Namibian schools the opinion is clear: “*It will be a good thing, but the reality (..) is that we have to look at other issues.*”<sup>133</sup>

## 5.1 The University of Namibia

In 1992, The University of Namibia (UNAM) was established by SWAPO, the new government. With the motto ‘Education, Service and Development’ the university should play an important role in building the new democratic state of Namibia. That mission is stated at UNAM's website:

*“A unique confluence binds the birth of the new nation with that of the university. Both are repositories of democratic values. UNAM constitutes a vital part of a vibrant civil society. As such it renders democracy more meaningful, particularly by upholding both the cardinal value and practice of academic freedom. This in turn enables the institution to initiate and shape open discourse on all aspects of Namibian society. (...) Inspired by these values, the university stands ready to serve the nation.”*<sup>134</sup>

As a ‘vital part of a civil society’ UNAM serves as a connective link between the government and the people. As a part of the new democratic Namibia UNAM should practise democracy and thereby qualify and encourage people to participate as members in a democratic society.

The question whether the Internet can help fulfilling these objectives was replied by a lecturer like this: “*Internet is seen as a tool that should enhance the objectives and the mission of the university. If we are to provide teaching, conduct research and provide services to the community, Internet is seen as a tool that could be used in all these areas.*”

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<sup>132</sup> Ministry of higher...timecode 555

<sup>133</sup> Ministry of higher..timecode 250

<sup>134</sup> Information from [www.unam.na](http://www.unam.na)

The hypothetically quote above shows that Internet is a new thing, and not many experiences has been made concerning the Internet - yet.

### **Internet as a priority?**

Internet was initiated at UNAM in 1996. When the Belgian government sponsored full Internet access to the university, funding from the Namibian government helped to develop a communication infrastructure. The computer centre proudly presents, that with a total of 600 computers *"the whole UNAM community, excluding the students,"*<sup>136</sup> is connected. The 'whole UNAM community' covers almost 90% of the staff.<sup>137</sup> The situation reflects the hierarchy in the university structure but also reflects the traditionally perception of learning and knowledge as being delivered from lecturer to student.

Two main reasons are mentioned as background for implementation of Internet at UNAM:

- **Government priorities/management priorities**

UNAM is today getting 90% of their funding from the Namibian government. Out of that funding only 1% is used on ICT: *"There is lots of projects, which is for the government -, like agriculture - given high priority (...) And as the government gives us 90 % of our money of course we will want to dance according to the tune of the government."*<sup>138</sup> - as Clint Nicholson, Head of Computer Centre at UNAM puts it. Even if UNAM is considered autonomous and independent from the state, government priorities will also be reflected in the priorities at UNAM. As long as no clear policy is to be implemented from the ministry it is uncertain if it will ever be of high priority at UNAM. In all levels that situation seem to be present: it is crucial to "convince" the top management at UNAM about the need as well as it is crucial to "convince" the government to make an Internet strategy on a national level, if Internet should reach high priority. Again the question of genuine needs will affect the decision making – if the need for agricultural development is seen as more important Internet will probably not reach top priority.

- **Consequences of "not knowing"**

Lack of exposure to Internet is widespread at UNAM, especially at top management.<sup>139</sup> Staff at the Computer Centre constantly run into problems where their knowledge about computers is neglected in favour of the lack of knowledge among the top management. The "not knowing" influences the decisions on top level as in general it is much easier to believe in rumours if you can not relate the rumour to relevant knowledge. *"This year almost nothing*

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<sup>135</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga, timecode 569

<sup>136</sup> Interview with C. Nicholson, timecode lige før reaction

<sup>137</sup> Interview with C. Nicholsson, timecode , historie

<sup>138</sup> Interview with C. Nicholsson, timecode 480

<sup>139</sup> Interview with C. Nicholsson, timecode 540

*was spend because of the Y2K issue even if I told them I had everything under control, "*<sup>140</sup> explains the head of Computer Centre. A similar situation evoked in the early Internet days at UNAM where some staff members thought - and fought for - Internet only to be for a privileged group. Justin Chisenga, a lecturer in the Department for Information and Communication, explains that the stories of pornography caused a big resistance among staff and an uncertainty about what Internet was and could be used for.<sup>141</sup> Through information about more positive sides of Internet, the Internet-Committee at UNAM prevented that Internet was only given to a privileged group of staffmembers. In spite of the committee work the resistance towards Internet still caused a big difference between staff- and students access as only 10 computers are reserved for the 4000 students at UNAM.

As a consequence of the uncertainty mentioned above a lot of emphasis was put on the Internet at UNAM library, as the Internet seemed to be of obvious relevance here. Funding was provided partly by the Belgian Government's "Communication and Library" programme<sup>142</sup> and as most activities had been computerised from an early stage the transition to Internet took place without major problems. In 1997 all 16 professional librarians had access to Internet from their own computers.

Our analysis of UNAM will involve three different usergroups: **librarians, staff members and students.**

### **5.1.1 UNAM Library**

At the university WebPage the objectives are stated as follows:

*"The University Library is a pivotal player in the process of education, development and social change. Being central to learning, teaching and research, our primary goal is to meet the information needs of staff and students and to serve as a national reference library."*<sup>143</sup>

The mission stated above shows that the self-image of the library is notified as being an agent for change. To develop new strategies is an ongoing task for a library and the new technology was therefore met with high expectations: *"Our library is of course very new and small (...).there is still a huge gap in terms of resources, comparing to more established*

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<sup>140</sup> Interview with C. Nicholsson, timecode 400, The Y2K phenomenon refers to the problems with computers at new year 2000.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga, timecode 580

<sup>142</sup> COMLIB aims at enhancing the general information infrastructure of UNAM through the Computer Centre and the library. Connectivity to and networking with the other University centres are given priority, as well as the notion that acquisition of goods and supplies will be done by Namibian companies. <http://www.unam.na/4320/comlib.htm>

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.unam.na/4320/lmission.htm>

*libraries out there. So the Internet couldn't have come at a better time.*"<sup>144</sup> There was an already established need and the Internet could fulfil the wishes. Furthermore the Internet allowed a cut down in expenses on various periodicals, where the online magazines were much cheaper to access. Still the amounts of periodicals were growing – not on the bookshelves, but on the computer.<sup>145</sup>

Unlike many other Universities in Sub-Saharan Africa library staff at UNAM participates and contributes in all Internet related meetings at the University, as they serve as both one of the first, but also one of the best skilled, user-groups at UNAM.<sup>146</sup>

### **Librarians as gatekeepers**

Stressing that not all information on the Internet is fully reliable - and with the limited accessibility to Internet for library users in mind "*subject Librarians are doing their best to surf the Internet, identify, evaluate and make available various Internet resources on their home pages.*"<sup>147</sup>, explains a subject librarian. And he continues: "*In a developing academic environment where there is a shortage of information sources, the library home page can also act as a gateway to the world's electronic information sources.*"<sup>148</sup> These 'gateways' serve as a valuable tool to get easy access to valuable information carefully selected by a professional.

The 10 computers now available at the library serve as the only place at UNAM where all students can use the Internet no other demands than a student card are required. The students have to book in advance for time at the computers. By being in charge of the booking-counter the staff members at the library play an important role as gatekeepers in relation to student accessibility. They can decide which students should have access and which should be denied.<sup>149</sup> This function gives the library staff another status, which improve their position.

### **Professional/personal empowerment?**

As these subject-based webpages are given high priority, the work task of the librarians is becoming increasingly web-based and therefore also serve as an important means for professional development. Not only the ability to offer a better service for the users, but the mere conditions of being a librarian have changed and improved tremendously. When we came to interview a librarian he was busy surfing the net, proudly admitting that he had become addicted to it and really enjoyed it: "*Life is becoming easier and easier with the*

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<sup>144</sup> Fred, timecode 372

<sup>145</sup> Fred, timecode 340

<sup>146</sup> Chisenga, Justin: Surfing

<sup>147</sup> <http://www.unam.na/4320/interser.htm>

<sup>148</sup> Chisenga, Justin: Surfing..

<sup>149</sup> Interview with UNAM students, timecode ?

*possibility of finding information.*”<sup>150</sup> Not only his work duties are becoming easier - 'life' is being mentioned and supports the notion that library staff members have become more satisfied with their jobs and even stay after hours. The issue of private use of Internet during working hours is being dealt with in a very flexible manner as most of the staff is very much into their subjects and do not distinguish between private and job related use.<sup>151</sup>

### **Subconclusion - The library**

The library has been affected intensively with the implementation of Internet. Seen as a an 'agent of change' providing access to information, empowering the library will multiply the empowering effect to the users benefiting from the new possibilities the library can provide with the Internet. Serving as a resource centre Internet has lifted the library far away from the problems with very limited physical amount of books on the shelves. Students and lecturers will now have access to the newest of the newest and thereby keep track of the latest development in their respective fields. One disadvantage with the electronic resources is the risk that it will only benefit a small part of the users - the limited amount of computers as one reason, the large number of computer illiterate users another. For the many the former situation with physical magazines on the shelves will probably be preferable compared to the new system with online magazines, as computer illiteracy will slowly become a prerequisite for finding the right information. In that way yet another possible gap between the users have been established with the Internet.

The library has not only been empowered in terms of the extended volume of services provided, but also in terms of the influential power the computer literate staff has gained which now enables them to participate in discussions and decisions in an area where they are seen as competent. Librarians experience better conditions to perform in job related functions, but also their professionalism is being constantly challenged and expanded, making them well educated and confident in their job and powerful members of the University community.

### **5.1.2 Students and the Internet**

There is no doubt that the Internet is popular among the students. Many students responded when asked that they heard about the Internet from friends and then started using it themselves or with the help from friends.<sup>152</sup> *“It is very popular to use the Internet: If you ask a student if he uses it he will just say yes even if he doesn't use it. It's a shame saying you don't use it.”*<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Fred, timecode 362

<sup>151</sup> Chisenga, Justin: Surfing..

<sup>152</sup> Victoria, timecode 525

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Victoria, timecode 236-245

The limited access to Internet at UNAM with 10 computers for 4000 students was visible to us even at our very first visit. The long line at the library leading to the desk for subscriptions indicated that the Internet service is very popular. Even the note saying: “Only one person at the computer at the time” was not respected. 2-3 persons used many of the computers at the same time: One was busy typing while the other(s) interested followed the action on the screen. The ‘action’ in these examples typically involved various chat groups and entertainment pages, which created a forum of discussion and laughter around the screen. Only UNAM students can use the computers and they have to book one hour in advance to get one hour of access. The Internet is meant to serve educational purposes only – playing games and watching pornography is not allowed.

### **The students use of Internet**

To find out what purposes the students are using the Internet for Justin Chisenga, lecturer at Communication studies, started a research including a questionnaire to the students. To supplement our personal interviews with students at UNAM we have used selected results from 100 of the returned questionnaires to give us an idea about the users and their use of the Internet. (The following data can be found in appendix B)

### **Communication**

Talking about the actual use of Internet the picture is clear: Email, as a tool to communicate with especially people abroad, is being mentioned as the most important aspect of the Internet use. 78 % from the survey answer that they use electronic mail on a regular basis.<sup>154</sup> We interviewed a girl from Zambia, who studied at UNAM. Sending emails to her friends and parents in Zambia formed the biggest part of her use and need for the Internet.<sup>155</sup> No one in the survey is communicating through email with other students in Namibia and only one is communicating with relatives in Namibia. An explanation to this could be that the Internet in Namibia is still – as mentioned before - at a stage of infancy. The actual amount of people to communicate with through email is of a very limited nature. With a globalisation perspective in mind it is worth to notice the rising possibilities to make contact to like-minded people from other countries through the Internet. A student at UNAM might feel that he/she has more in common with students from e.g. peers in US than a person same age living in the rural areas of Namibia. The Internet creates a possibility to establish this kind of contact.

41 % of the users in the survey are from outside Namibia. Having experienced Internet before the need is already established and is therefore present even it might be more difficult to get access at UNAM than at home.

Also the time limit might influence the extensive use of email at the university. At a relatively fast speed one can quickly send lots of emails, which compared to subscriptions to

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<sup>154</sup> See **appendix** nr. ?, question 13

<sup>155</sup> Interview with J. Mganga, timecode: 303

mailinglists and participating in discussion groups match the limited time available online.

### **Information**

Beside emails, browsing the web is used by 63 % of the students in the survey. The most popular category chosen is the 'entertainment and sports'; 'Accessing materials recommended by lecturers' comes in second.. The interest for foreign countries, especially USA, is common among the student users. News papers outside Namibia are read on the web by 14% whereas only 6% read Namibian news online. Some students never use Namibian or even African websites, but use yahoo or others, mostly US based facilities.<sup>156</sup> That situation will probably also depend on the amount and the quality of the African websites - if they are no good for the exact purpose one might choose better, more established ones. The problem about finding information about Africa made in Africa seems to be of such a character that it is now possible to find sites on the Internet matter this question.<sup>157</sup> A lot of the Information available about Africa is from foreign countries. The only Namibian based website mentioned by the students in the survey is the chat-room provided by an ISP, where students chat about anything, mentioning politics and finding boyfriends/girlfriends as the most common topics.<sup>158</sup>

Through the Internet the students get access to an information-bank which is far beyond anything the book shelves at the library can provide. Even though students are able to download the information they need they can not print it out free of charge and have to either write down the information or pay to get it on paper. The time limit prevents them to spend hours in front of the computer and thereby influence the quantity and maybe the quality of the collected information.

### **One man's loss – another man's gain**

Some academic staff encourages the students to use the Internet more, but it requires matching the accessibility provided. On one side it can be empowering for the students to learn about the Internet, on the other hand it can create problems and a new kind of dividing line between the students might occur: The computer literate and the computer illiterate - the connected and the disconnected. The advantaged students know where to find the necessary information fast and efficiently, the disadvantaged have to struggle to meet the demands from the lecturer if they have never used computers. Before nobody had access. Now some have and some have not.

A perspective to this could be a situation we witnessed at a secretary's office: The secretary was helping some students with word processing and also did the layout for them. When they

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<sup>156</sup> Victoria, timecode 30, B side

<sup>157</sup> Articals on www. Unam/na

<sup>158</sup> Students at UNAM; timecode 107

finished they discretely gave her some money. These probably computer illiterate students had to pay to get their assignments finished on time. If students have to pay for help with simple word processing it can be assumed that students also need help to search for course material on the Internet if such is required. It also shows that the secretary suddenly gets a very important position being in charge of a desirable tool. In that sense it pays off to be in the good books with the staff as it can give access to their private computers. The above raised aspects can be seen as side effects of the implementation of Internet, which were not intended but have to be considered in the further planning and development.

### **Subconclusion to students and the Internet**

As the students mainly concentrate on e-mails it seems like there is a big need for communication with the outside world. Limited access to Internet for students is a problem, which will probably become continuously more urgent as the knowledge about Internet will grow and reach out to more and more users, who will need and maybe demand access. The empowerment in the sense of access to information will grow, assuming that a wider knowledge field enables and motivates students to seek even more knowledge. That is supported by quotes from students, showing a continuously greater dissatisfaction with the conditions and a growing will to protest against the existing standards. On the other side our observation at the library showed that it was only a limited group who was using it. Perhaps the others are not that interested and can not see the importance of fighting for more Internet access at UNAM. In that case it will be difficult for a small group of students to revolutionise the university.

### **5.1.3 Staff and the Internet**

Members of academic and administrative staff are all connected to the Internet and as such they can be seen as a very privileged user group compared to the students. Intentionally the Internet and the assisting infrastructure were meant, to enable the staff to improve their communication and the networking between the departments. The Head of the Computer Centre says: *"I would like them to use the Internet but at the moment it is 'one to one', they will send email and receive email"*<sup>159</sup>

A student at the Department of Information and Communication conducted a survey in 1998 concerning the staffmembers usage of the Internet and came to a result that sustains the observation from the Computer Centre: 92% of the respondents in the survey were using mainly the e-mail facilities on the Internet. A major part of the communication was found to be between the staff at UNAM.

If the network was used to its maximum it would provide an opportunity to share information in a much larger scale than now. On the other side it would include all the

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<sup>159</sup> Interview with C. Nicholsson, timecode USE

departments to display their information on the public network. Information, which was usually kept in private, would be seen by many and an element of control would be added to the quality of the job performance. This could result in effectiveness but could also discourage some staff members to stay at UNAM if they do not feel comfortable with the new working conditions.

### **Internet as a part of the teaching**

Internet is gradually being received by the staff and the possibilities found out:

*“ (...) some departments are coming up with their own arrangements, sometimes they have it all (materials, red.) on the Internet and it is proving more and more useful because the students can just search on the net for them(...) unlike coming to the library for every information. That is a very positive sign (..) I only wish they would not avoid the library.”*<sup>160</sup>

With the free access to the Internet it becomes possible to make extensive use of material collected from the Internet for teaching purposes. *“In the past I just printed an example for the students but they became lazy.”*<sup>161</sup>, a lecturer said. Now he will give the student the web address instead. From being a passive web user receiving the materials from a lecturer they have to be active and retrieve the material by themselves on the Internet. Some students also explain that they are sometimes asked to hand in their assignments through email.<sup>162</sup>

### **New possibilities arising – for some**

With lack of computer training at UNAM, computer literacy ends up with a question of personal motivation. Internet thereby creates a distinction between the staffmembers. A dividing line between the computer literate and the illiterate. Some of the staffmembers use it widely and efficiently while others have a more simple use. Being in the group of computer literate Justin Chisenga has a sublime position.

*“Some of my tasks here are not a part of my job description. They are a result of my strong involvement from the time when the university was putting up Internet services (...) I was the one conducting the training on using e-mail, webpage design, conducted to training in using the web, so as a result people were getting back to me – back to the teacher (...) And I have come to accept it (..) I like it (...) I enjoy it very much.”*<sup>163</sup>

His status has increased not just inside UNAM. He has established contacts with academic colleagues internationally through the Internet. Not all the lecturers at UNAM can boast with success stories like Justin Chisengas.

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<sup>160</sup> Interview with Fred, timecode 374-398

<sup>161</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga, timecode 256

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Victoria, timecode 250-265

<sup>163</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga, timecode 165-180, site A1

Many staffmembers did not find it easy to change the long used paper with the new computer connected to a network, especially the secretaries found it difficult.

*“I can confess to you that the Internet installations, especially the network at the university is one of the most under-utilised (...). I remember one time we made a network analysis and we found out that only 4% of the network resources were being used. And it was a matter for us in the information system committee. (...) We had a problem (...) even various messages were sent on paper (...) and we thought that the network (...) was going to be used to such stuff.”*<sup>164</sup>

One of the reasons to the situation at UNAM is the lack of training. *“The infrastructure is there - **using** the infrastructure is another thing. People need to get trained, from top management and down.”*<sup>165</sup> As computer literacy is encouraged, service is provided for staff members to connect a home computer to the Internet through the server at UNAM. Upgrading both their work and home computers to reasonable standards is free of charge. These services provided by the Computer Centre are however not advertised, which might be one of the reasons why not many make use of the services - yet.<sup>166</sup> The few fully computer literate staff members are perhaps also one of the reasons because to get the upgrade one has to apply. To write a motivation one has to be somehow computer literate, otherwise it is difficult to write a convincing application. If more of the staff would express the need for various services it might influence the priority in the management as well, but for the time being the lack of money is well rooted in the lack of priority of the field.

### **Sub conclusion on staff and the Internet**

The staff at UNAM is a divided group. The job and the status are different whether you are a secretary, a librarian or a lecturer. Beside from that another line is departing the staff - the Internet. The staffs who are well aware and can use the extensive possibilities within Internet are the ones increasing their capital in both economic and social fields. As far as their awareness and skills in the Internet field are present, they are very likely also the best educated in the first place. As the university is focusing more and more on Internet as a resource necessary for a modern university the staff members not using the Internet facilities will be left out. Making restrictions on the Internet use so that the system will not be overloaded is considered. Then the ones connected will only be the staffs who have important stuff to do. And will the non-users at the moment then ever be able to reach a certain level of computer literate so that they can join the Internet -elite?

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<sup>164</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga, timecode 061-089 site B

<sup>165</sup> Interview with C. Nicholson, timecode 142

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Clint Nicholson, limitations

#### **5.1.4 Sub-Conclusion: UNAM & Internet – the bridge or the gap?**

Even if Internet and the level of computer literacy at UNAM is still what a computer expert would call ‘in a stage of infancy’ UNAM is driving along the information superhighway, maybe not at full speed, but still driving. Some of the drivers may be a little inexperienced but routine and some driving lessons when needed can qualify the drivers to change to higher gears when the time come.

Still computers are not seen in every corner, but both staff and students are continuously getting more and more used to Internet as a resource for information and as a tool for communication. They are using it for whatever purpose they may have in relation to their academic work and their private lives. In that sense it has empowered the people using it though it might be in different ways.

#### **International contacts**

For UNAM the Internet have opened up for contact to the outside world which in that sense have not been possible before. The possibility through the Internet to get in contact with organisations and institutions in every country in a cheap and effective way, opens up for potential contacts with donor organisations which could help with the always needed funding.

Some staffmembers are getting work related academic contacts abroad and are exchanging knowledge and ideas. This two-way communication could have been realised before, but Internet makes it cheap and easy. Establishing contact with like-minded in foreign countries gives inspiration to the both staff and students.

Through the UNAM web-site the university is made visible to a broader audience which in the long run can influence on the amount of foreign students or lecturers willing to spend a semester on UNAM. The Internet makes it easy to establish this ‘one to many’ communication which the website is an example of. Another advantage that the website has created is that people calling the university for information now can have a look at the website instead - dependent on whether they have access to the Internet. This will mean that the university will get a face outwardly controlled of few persons - the persons in charge of the webpages. Different messages and confusion about regulations can be avoided when the information is placed on the Internet. The resources used for secretaries giving information to the calling students could perhaps in time be channelled to other priorities. The Internet makes the awareness of UNAM wider and in time it could be an empowering situation for the university.

The growing possibilities that Internet creates makes an academic progress possible. That can, beside from getting staff members to stay at the university also attract a well-educated

workforce from other places. UNAM will be an attractive university to work on as a further development of ones academic and personal skills is possible with access to the Internet. For the students Internet at UNAM can make it easier to follow an educational program on another university where Internet is a compulsory tool in the everyday life. In that sense Internet can empower the university to be a more flexible and dynamic institution.

An important feature at the library is a policy of maximising the skilled manpower at the library itself through short courses abroad – which in a longer perspective benefits the library as the knowledge gained will be passed over to the other colleagues.<sup>167</sup> The library in that sense works as a society of its own not depending on expensive training from outside or close links to the Computer Centre, which would not be able to provide enough training anyway. Furthermore it can be assumed that the continuous development possibilities will prevent the 'brain drain' problem experienced many places in Africa.

### **New roles**

For a major part of the students the use of Internet is related to their private-sphere. Communicating with pen pals abroad and through this, trying to meet a future girlfriend or boyfriend. Internet has opened some doors for the students personally but the limited access and the lack of training results in only few using it for academic purposes. The group of students who are well founded in the Internet field are capable of turning the traditional student/teacher roles upside down. Students are more computer literate than their teachers and will be teaching them about Internet. In that way Internet can help bringing more equality to the relation between students and lecturers. This can be seen as an empowering situation for the students. Whether it has empowered the university as a whole would probably be too dramatic to conclude.

It is naive to think that a ministry without Internet related knowledge will prioritise Internet in the educational sector before they have learnt, understood and agreed upon the possibilities given with Internet. The same is seen at UNAM, if the management are not computer literate Internet will not be of high priority. This turns the “traditional” grassroots development approach upside down, as the people in power has to be introduced to Internet first to see any value of it before they will choose to spread it further.

Even the Internet facilities at a present stage are not extended to a reasonable level for the students the hope for improvements is there, as Internet is said to play a major role at the university in the following years. Funding from UNDP has made it possible to build an International Resource Centre (IRC), a new library at UNAM fully equipped with computers. The same initiative will enable the library to get the 9 university centres around the country

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<sup>167</sup> Chisenga, Justin: Surfing..

connected. This initiative will make it possible to share a lot of information among the university centres and will create a broader accessibility for the students. In the future there is visions to allow the local community access to the new library which will bring new dimensions and perspectives for the fulfilment of the objectives concerning community service.

Internet at UNAM creates a bridge, connecting a well educated elite with the outside world but at the same time it makes a wider gap between the connected and the disconnected within the institution.

## **5.2 Panhofi Secondary school**

The Pan Hofi secondary school is placed about 900 kilometres from Windhoek and around 70 kilometres from the Angolan border, in a rural area where the imagination of Internet seem somehow out of place. As we drove through the small village with huts and barefooted children we were reminded of a side of Africa that contradicts the urban life in Windhoek.

The school has 480 students. Mr. Andima, our interviewee at the school, is the principal and has been there for five years. He told us that Internet was implemented after a meeting at the Ministry of Higher Education. The content of the meeting was to make a draft policy for Namibian schools to get better connected to the Internet and get them on ‘the information highway’, as he says. At this meeting it was decided that Pan Hofi should take the lead to be the first school to get connected.

### **Funding**

The school has succeeded to get a lot of attention in form of funding: 'Namibia Association of Norway', The Bank of Namibia, Norsk Hydro, Namibian Telecom and UUNET<sup>168</sup> are the people behind the 28 computers with Internet access at the school. For the time being, the funding enables the school to provide free access and unlimited use of Internet for the teachers at the school. But this will not last:

*“At the moment – it is sort of a grace period now to get people more using it and get more motivated. There will be restrictions later on and we are going to commercialise part of it (...) just to maintain the facility (...) and because of the expenses on the telephone lines.”<sup>169</sup>*

When the donors leave reality appears and the school has to find other sources of income. To survive as an extraordinary example among secondary schools, commercialisation might be the only sustainable solution.

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<sup>168</sup> UUNET is one of the Internet service providers in Namibia.

### **Pan Hofi Internet - for who?**

Pan Hofi is known as an international minded school and the international teachers are known to be the most frequent users of the Internet facilities. Again the question of Internet as a need can be discussed - if you feel the need from previous experiences you are likely to pursue to fulfil that need again. The Namibian teachers are not experienced Internet users, they are lacking behind. "*We work with those who are eager to go - the rest can come on gradually*"<sup>170</sup>, says the principal. It is fairly clear that Internet at Pan Hofi has not resulted in an advantage for everybody. The ones who already knew about the Internet are the ones *getting their hands* on it now. The school is not trying to introduce and train all the teachers to use the new media, instead they are relying on some kind of 'spill over' - effect that in the long run will perhaps involve the teachers not using it for the moment. One could assume that it would contribute to a bigger difference between the foreign teachers and the local ones. The question is whether this 'spill over' effect will work as intended or the local teachers will stay 'dis-connected.'

The students are not mentioned talking about the Internet, targeted at the teachers it seems like the school believes in the widely spread learning attitude that the teacher has to possess all the knowledge he intends to teach the students.

### **What are they using it for?**

In this early stage of Internet access at Pan Hofi some priorities has been made. The teachers have already got their private e-mail addresses and it will in future also be possible for the students to get one.<sup>171</sup> Though the teachers know how to use the Internet for research it is not normal procedure to download teaching material for the students. The principal tells us that the teachers are mostly using the World Wide Web to read Namibian newspapers, especially the sport News, but that he has some more idealistic hopes for the time to come: "*Once everybody knows how to use it and master certain amounts of skills, they will use it for dissemination, retrieving information, collecting information and spreading information.*"<sup>172</sup>

One important side effect with Internet is the motivation of the teachers in their teaching performance. Before they would be working to 1-2 p.m. whereas now some teachers stay at the school until 10 p.m. in the evening.<sup>173</sup> As in the case with the librarians at UNAM it seems like the introduction of Internet at Pan Hofi has caused a greater satisfaction with the duties of a teacher than before. Hopefully, motivated and well-informed teachers will benefit

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<sup>169</sup> Andima, timecode, 301

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Andima, timecode 204

<sup>171</sup> Interview with Andima, timecode 229

<sup>172</sup> Interview with Andima, timecode 322

the students and the school as a whole

### **Pan Hofi and the local community**

As mentioned, the commercialisation of the Internet will imply the opportunity for citizens from the surrounding areas to use the Internet at the school for a small fee. The initiative with public access is not meant as an attempt to involve everybody in 'the wonders of Internet', as the principal comments: "*We are not talking about community in the sense of illiterate people, we are talking about people who are at least literate, can study and can afford it.*"<sup>174</sup> Community empowerment through Pan Hofi will be for the people already empowered in the sense of ability to understand the possibilities given with Internet - as in the case with the teachers.

Also the money issue is playing a role - who will be able to pay for Internet access?

The principal continues: "*We are trying not to be unreasonable (..) It is not a moneymaking exercise. It is a service that we need to give to people.*"<sup>175</sup> Public access is seen as a service provided, but not as some ideological experiment with the aim of empowering the people as a whole. Here it can be assumed, that even if only a fragmented part of the community have the psychical access to Internet the knowledge and information retrieved will benefit more people, as empowerment for the few might spread in circles and thereby reach further out. The mere fact, that an until recently unknown town like Pan Hofi is now fresh in people's mind definitely mean something for the people involved - more especially for the principal at Pan Hofi who is now assisting in similar projects in different regions. It is a big question if Internet at Pan Hofi will cause any difference for the local community as a whole, as the population in the area mainly consists of subsistence farmers of which most are still excluded from Internet by financial reasons.

### **Spread the word!**

Pan Hofi will in short time establish themselves as an ISP with its own server which enables to connect the 48 schools in the region to the Internet - as soon as the telephone lines are in place at the schools. Computer illiterate teachers at the surrounding schools receive training at Pan Hofi to be prepared when the planned implementation of Internet becomes reality. If they show true dedication they can even be lucky to get a sponsored computer from Pan Hofi, who in that way try to network the region by sharing the resources they have been provided.

This initiative contributes to equality among the schools. If they all have it and use it to share important information it will open for a co-operation which has not been possible before. One problem that could arise is lack of money. Who will pay for the Internet? Will it be

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<sup>173</sup> Interview with Andima, timecode 283

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Andima, timecode 355

<sup>175</sup> Interview with Andima, timecode 371

given the necessary attention and priority to really implement it - or will other, more present, needs win higher priorities? If donors are not willing to support the other schools financially they might have to commercialise as Pan Hofi to make it sustainable. But will there be enough people in the surrounding areas who have the interest and the money to make use of the facilities offered?

### **Internet empowerment at Pan Hofi?**

The Pan Hofi experience raises some questions concerning Internet and empowerment. Is it always to be considered empowering to have computers with Internet at a school? No, the mere presence is not enough in itself as it is the use of it that is the interesting part. So is it empowering for Pan Hofi that the teachers can now read their papers on the Internet and follow the sport results? No, one would say, not directly, but in a greater perspective motivated and satisfied teachers will hopefully influence the school as a whole - through the Internet that brought this motivation to the staff members. The empowerment circle is worth to have in mind talking about the influence of Internet not to neglect the benefits it does create.

Internet is still a new media at Pan Hofi and they have to figure out how they will make use of it constructively. It is still on a very early stage to conclude what difference it has made as the learning process has just begun and the plans are many. Pan Hofi stands as one example of how to implement Internet at schools, future will tell if the example will stay unique or will serve as 'the way to do it' among other schools.

### **5.3 INCECT THON &- School Net - a different approach for the children**

The following projects are examples of new ways of developmental aid in forms of IT, initiated by an American biologist, Joris Komen from the National Museum in Windhoek. These innovative projects were founded due to an experience of unsuccessful projects funded by international donors. Efforts to start multipurpose community centres where grown ups can become acquainted with the Internet is, according to Mr. Komen, misunderstood as many projects are dealing with the wrong age-group. He believes that children should be the main target group, as it is much easier for them to learn and get a great benefit out of it. He states that school-connectivity is not a high priority in the NGO's but that Namibian schools have big potentials if they get connected. On that background he arranged a nation-wide competition called 'Insect-thon'.

#### **One good turn deserves another**

Insect-thon was based on a problem with lack of manpower to finish the digitalisation of hand written insect catalogue records at the National Museum. The idea to empower school pupils with computers and Internet in exchange for services for the museum evoked. Funds were raised from national and international donors and from 15 schools all over Namibia 92

pupils between 11 and 19 years participated in a competition about digitising the data. English literacy was required but no previous computer experience was needed, but appreciated. All competing schools got rewards as computers, computer training, software, books etc.

This way of thinking in Insect-thon reflects an ‘employer versus employee’ attitude and thereby avoids the ‘helper versus victim’ dichotomy. The employee gets paid for a well-done job as in Insect-thon where the pupils are paid in terms of materials. To officially employ the kids would probably not have been acceptable according to human rights etc. but to arrange a competition under the same terms seems to be more appropriate. Not many donor organisations establish projects on the ‘quit pro quo’ mentality as seen with Insect-thon.

A lot of response from the world community evoked through the Insect- Thon webpage, where people from all over wrote to congratulate with what was seen as a big success. The responses are visible on the webpage to show the international attention, constantly looking for funding this is probably a wise tactic from the initiator's side.

The Insect-thon is trying to empower the pupils in a way that contradicts normal aid projects. The pupils have almost had a real job and have earned the reward – Internet to their communities. The participants from this year Insect-thon will be mentors of a group of pupils next year, to insure that the computer literacy is being spread, the same children can not compete again. They are participants in an acquisition of a tool, which is mentioned – by Joris Komen - to be a very empowering and important tool to get. And they are the ones mastering it.

### **School-Net**

Inspired by the success with Insect-Thon Joris Komen launched another project - the ‘School-net’. The project aims to connect all primary and secondary schools in Namibia to the Internet, the schools participating in the Insect-thon the first ones to get connected. What makes this project so special is – like in Insect-thon - its pupilbased foundation. School-Net will try to empower communities in an innovative way where the pupils of the schools are the collaborative partners. In comparison with others projects he says: *“It is a different program. We are not trying just to dump infrastructure, we want to get the kids empowered. They (other donors, projects, red.) never thought about empowering kids, they always thought about empowering teachers or headmasters or schools.”*<sup>176</sup>

Donors will fund the computers and the Internet. To ensure that the computers do not end at a headmaster's office the schools have to sign a document saying that the pupils should be

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<sup>176</sup> Interview with J. Komen, timecode 178

responsible for both the computers and the training of other pupils. No grown ups are involved directly, but in the long run they are seen as a potential group to be empowered through the children's access to the Internet:

*You got to get kids to learn to appreciate the value of this educational resource (...).*

“To give them (the children, red.) a status saying: ‘Hey, I am an expert and I can offer you my service as an expert’ - this is a kid talking to a community saying: ‘Here I am, do you want to know about this spare parts or this pest you got on your plants (...) that information this kid could be tasked to find. Let the kids be the mechanism, let the kids find the information that can empower the community, let the kids be the mediator between the Internet and the population. (...)Once that mediation has grown enough (...) then maybe we will see growth (in the community, red.)”<sup>177</sup>

The focus on the pupils to play all parts in the learning process – both as learner and teacher - can be seen is a revolutionary new approach in Namibia. A shift in the traditional roles of teacher and learner will probably be seen as a big difference and with scepticism in societies where the hierarchy is different. The thought is that the adults will ask the children for advice and the children will have access to the well of information. To see the children as building the future is the intention behind - the children being in charge of this 'desirable' tool and thereby win some status.

### **Illiteracy**

Joris Komen do not see computer illiteracy as a problem. He criticises the people just donating computers without Internet connections: “*Stop talking about bloody computers – talk Internet, because Internet is the point of departure from being a naive computer user to be a literate computer user.*”<sup>178</sup> The Internet being very user-friendly compared to for instance word-processing is behind his assumption that Internet can actually be used by almost computer illiterate people, only a short introduction necessary to start with.

What is seen as a major barrier many other places – training – is not focused on as a big problem. The project is not to train all the pupils at the school to be computer literate. With one computer at a school for 1000 pupils the computer should not be used for typing of assignments, instead the Internet should be seen as a valuable library source for information to the many schools without a satisfying library.

### **Dependency**

Over the first two donor funded years with School Net a need and a dependency will be established and the schools and the local community will have to cover the expenses to the Internet with own resources. Joris Komen do not see a problem in people from rural areas

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<sup>177</sup> mmm, slutningen af bånd 1

<sup>178</sup>

that have to finance the Internet - as soon as the need has been established it will stay a need and the community will raise the money, he says.

There is no doubt whether the Internet will provide some possibilities to the rural communities, but still it can be rather limited if people are not at least computer literate to a minimum and able to speak English. If it is only the children who will depend on the Internet and feel the need for it could possibly be difficult- as a child – to convince the community to spend the limited resources on something like the Internet.

### **Subconclusion**

The Insect-thon and the School-Net are examples of an ambitious foreigner's dream coming true. Joris Komen is a member of a state institution, the National museum and is in that sense not a representative from a foreign country trying to bring aid to Namibia. He is an 'insider', who knows how to get around in a somehow bureaucratic Namibia, knows who to meet and who to ask for what. This has resulted in 53 donors from in- and outside Namibia to fund the project.

What is so special about his projects is his focus on the children and this new approach to Internet with the children being the powerful force. In the two days Insect Thon his method was fruitful but with School Net there will be no powerful Joris Komen to encourage the children in the schools. The question is: Will the ambitions and intentions will be embraced and accepted by the people - or will they be turned down as crazy ideas? School Net is still in a planning process, the possibilities are many and the situation could *perhaps* open up for new possibilities for a small community, the pupils being in charge, which would in itself be a new situation to cope with.

## **5.4 UNESCO - MISA - AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER**

Access to the Internet is not only found in educational institutions and in the expensive Internet Cafe's. Some alternatives are to be found by the public at places with a **different ideology** behind the services provided than the mere profit making we found at the I-cafes. The following initiatives are included in this section as they are involved in **educational activities** based on library functions in three different areas and as such they have set up their Internet facilities as a contribution to educational development.

### **MISA**

Besides their main activities MISA runs a small media library where the Internet is seen as an integrated part of the media environment. A rather symbolic fee of 2 Namib Dollars is paid pr hour, not to gain profit, but more to 'keep things in control.'<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Interview with Rasheed, MISA2, timecode 146, 161

## UNESCO

A documentation and Internet Access Centre was started in 1997 in Windhoek UNESCO office to increase the possibilities of public access to the Internet.<sup>180</sup> A small UN library is administrated by a secretary, who is also in charge of the three computers that make the Internet Access Centre. Around 300 users are using the centre on a regularly basis.

## American Cultural Centre

American Cultural Centre (ACC) was one of the first with Internet connectivity in Namibia in 1994, only two years later they were offering Internet access to the public at their library downtown Windhoek. The library has about 2000 members using its facilities on a weekly basis - a busy place with a professional outlook and professional facilities. The librarian, from Namibia, explains the Internet access as an aspect of **global equality**: *"We took a decision that since the Internet is American based and since we are the US information cultural centre we should be able to provide the information that the others in US is getting as well."*<sup>181</sup>

## THE USERGROUP

*"How would the poor people use the Internet? You see them here every day, they become addicted to it"*<sup>182</sup> - a typical user statement. The users know they are lucky to have the opportunity to enjoy free Internet access and seem well informed about other places and limitations in the field of public access. The three computers at each place are always occupied, 1 hour to each user is given to ensure the possibility to search in depth on the Internet. To offer library services is essential for all three places and there is a belief that the user group could be recruited from the library userbase - people looking for educational material in the range of UNESCO, media or US, respectively.<sup>183</sup>

At American Cultural Centre up to 75 % and at UNESCO around 50 % of the users are students<sup>184</sup>, other users mentioned are businessmen, researchers, teachers and just people coming in from the street. No tourists are allowed any of the places, as access to Internet is limited and should be prioritised to the people who have no access other places.

At UNESCO the target group is more like the public in general and Mr. Yuki, the communication officer, seems proud to tell us about the absence of users from the rich areas and that most users come from Katatura and Khomasdahl, the black and the coloured neighbourhoods, respectively.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Interview with Yuki, timecode 45

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Venna, why..

<sup>182</sup> Interview with user befor Yuki, timecode 00

<sup>183</sup> Interview with Rasheed, MISA 2, timecode 070

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Venna, users..

<sup>185</sup> Interview with Yuki, timecode 148

## USE of the Internet

There is **no control** with the actual use of the Internet as the computers are situated with the possibility for privacy. Through observations and interviews with users and staff a wide range of functions used on the Internet are being mentioned: Different search engines, hotmail, penpal sites, chat (both Namibian and International), sport and music pages, reading news (CNN, The Namibian) and mailing lists.<sup>186</sup>

The places have **intentions** with their facilities - or restrictions?

- **ACC** has set up rules for their Internet: *"Our intention is not really to provide Internet so that anybody can come and just look for anything."*<sup>187</sup> Emails, chat and pornography is prohibited as they want people to use the Internet effectively for research, especially since they are students.<sup>188</sup> The information should basically be about America but the librarian explains, with a smile, that most pages on the Internet is US based anyway so she is not strict about it. *"Most people follow our rules because not everybody can afford the Internet cafe (..) we can devote your membership and that will be the end of your free Internet access."*<sup>189</sup>

- **UNESCO** has a poster that recommends the use to a specific area: *"No playing games! No adult pages! No word processing! Use the Internet as a valuable tool for educational purposes."* Mr. Yuki expresses disappointment with the users - he knows that email and search in the entertainment areas is widely used and the mission of serving educational purposes is more an ideology than a fact.<sup>190</sup>

- **MISA** has no restrictions concerning what people want from the Internet, it is a free media that people can make use of in any way they want. MISA considers Internet as a very individual medium compared to for instance the radio. It is therefore also stressed that the information obtained from the Internet should be possible to print out for free to be distributed to other people.<sup>191</sup>

## **TRAINING?**

ACC is a key player in orientation courses for all users, even schools, NGO's, journalists and UNAM have had introduction courses arranged by request. As around 4000 members are members of the library the courses are important to the two staff members: *"By offering the orientation it cuts down our work, we don't have to look for information for them, they can look for information themselves."*<sup>192</sup> Efficiency, yes indeed, as it saves time for the

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<sup>186</sup> Interviews with users at UNESCO

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Venna, strategy

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Venne, strategy

<sup>189</sup> Interview with Venna, strategy

<sup>190</sup> Interview with Yuki, timecode 390

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Rasheed, MISA2, timecode 380

<sup>192</sup> Interview with Venna, orientations

librarians, but it can also empower the library users if they can find information themselves and not always have to rely on staff to do it for them.

To improve the use of Internet "for the right purpose" UNESCO suggests a workshop to find out whether it is lack of knowledge or lack of interest that causes the overwhelming use of email compared to educational research.<sup>193</sup> Many of the users are not very computer literate and UNESCO is not offering any workshops, only 'hands on training' by the secretary. *"I am interested, but do not have enough computer skills to use it,"*<sup>194</sup> one student said as she was studying at UNESCO's library.

### **Empowerment?**

There is no doubt that the three initiatives introduced here differ from the ordinary Internet cafe's in town not only in structure, but also in goals and objectives. UNESCO believes Internet is a useful tool in education and to increase access to information is seen as empowering the people who would not have had the information without.<sup>195</sup> During our interview with Mr. Yuki, he tends to focus on the gap between information rich/information poor, fully aware of the debates going on about Internet he uses words like "empowerment and get it out to the poorest of the poorest" several times.<sup>196</sup>

As access to information is crucial for the task expected from these resource centres the Internet has empowered the introduced places to a wide extent. The mere fact that Internet is present could serve as an incentive for the Internet users to also use the other facilities being offered, which agrees with the objectives of offering information to the public.

The users themselves are getting their hands on something they would - for most of them - not have the possibility to use if they had to pay for it. The Internet is not only being used as an extension of the existing services, though the use is stimulated by intentions, but opens up to a wide spectrum of information and possibilities for the use of Internet which the users can make use of any way they wish.

## **5.5 Analysis Part 2 - an overall perspective**

Some consequences of Internet have been shown in the previous chapter, the mission at stage now, is how these consequences can be related to democratisation processes in Namibia. The cases we have chosen are unique in the sense that Internet is not yet a part of school culture in Namibia - outside UNAM, outside Pan Hofi, outside the schools participating in

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with Yuki, timecode 394

<sup>194</sup> Interview with user before Yuki, timecode 018

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Yuki, timecode 118

<sup>196</sup> Interview with Yuki, timecode 140, 287,570

the Insect Thon. Thus our cases do not give a typical picture of the educational system in Namibia, but a picture of the Internet situation in the educational field. Lots of schools are waiting to be a part of that picture and lots of schools do not even have an idea of what they are missing.

“Education for all” is one of the slogans for Namibia after independence.

“Internet for all” still has a long way to go to become true - if it ever will and - and if it have to?

### **A strong educational sector**

There is no doubt that the Internet can greatly **reduce the isolation** of African universities on a world scheme, giving full access to professional and other information as well as opening up immediate and direct communication with other educational institutions on a national, regional and international level. The Internet has given new opportunities for sure - as seen with UNAM library, which has reached far with the Internet in terms of extended electronic resources and information sharing with others.

For schools like Pan Hofi and the 'coming to be' School Net participants the Internet brings with it a lot of new possibilities to expand existing teaching methods, the access to information being a new resource that, if used to its potential, can serve as a valuable tool. As Pan Hofi is planning to connect all the schools in the area Pan Hofi will still be a powerful agent in the change to Internet as initiator, ISP and gatekeeper. That Pan Hofi is interested in spreading the privileges they show an intention of expanded **co-operation and also solidarity** among the schools.

To give high priority to Internet access at places like UNAM could maybe contribute more to the democratisation process in Namibia than if the limited Internet resources were spread out to every school in the country. The latter being a matter of equality in access - the former being a matter of logic: To depend on the university to fulfil its role in society and to conduct research that benefits the country as a whole and not only a limited group. In that way the scarce resources will be used by a selected, but hopefully qualified and responsible, group of people devoted to serve their country rather than being distributed to schools who might have other needs than Internet at the moment. Talking about empowerment on a national level by implementing Internet in educational 'tankers' might not influence the country as a whole directly with Internet spread out to every school - we are only guessing whether will happen when the Internet scene develops further.

Analysing our material aspects of **equality** - or **inequality** - is present in various ways.

Properly managed with a view of equality, Internet could reduce differences within Namibian schools and their access to information, learning tools and opportunities. However, if appropriate care is not taken, Internet could lead to increase the separation in access to information and the gap between the have and the have-nots will widen. Most of the people and most of the schools are still considered 'have-nots' and are rapidly lacking behind their fellow students and colleagues

Websites are being made at UNAM and initiatives as Insect Thon and the Pan Hofi project attract international recognition. The gap between the have and the have-nots on a global level has been diminished - Namibia is connected and people are happily surfing the electronic waves. But a new distinction has been made - with **A and B teams**, being on individual, institutional and national level.

In the following we elaborate on the following aspects:

- **access**
- **need**
- **knowledge**
- **participation**

### **Access**

The lack of policy from the government on the Internet field results in a difference between the schools. In the long run the result can be a degradation of schools without Internet to B schools in opposition to the Internet connected schools – A schools. Remember the explanation from the Ministry of Higher Education about good leaders who implement Internet by themselves – and the others, who need help from the Ministry.<sup>197</sup> Not surprisingly, most of the A schools have always been A schools and most of the B schools have always been B schools, Internet is just added to the list of already existing differences. Before independence race was the dividing factor between schools, today it will depend on who has the **money** to pay for Internet themselves - or who has the right social contacts to get others to pay.

This supports the arguments put forward by Morales that Internet risks benefiting only a smaller group in the society - the ones with higher level of education, and that "*new gaps between the have and the have nots of information are likely to emerge within societies.*"<sup>198</sup>

Free Internet access for all is in place – in the initiatives mentioned under public access. Though these initiatives are only present in Windhoek the rest of the country still lack such facilities. The usergroups again show that not everybody has the possibility to make use of the facilities there – first step to the free access is to know that it is there. How to get to know

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<sup>197</sup> Interview with Alfred von Kent

about it solely depends on how to be introduced to the offer by social contacts due to very limited marketing and simply the felt need for it. If there is no felt need for anything like Internet, why should one seek for access to it? That Internet is offered for the whole population is right in theory, but reality is different, as the many will never get to use it due to other circumstances.

Librarians are largely involved in the discussions about the information society and what is needed to make it a reality in Namibia. The aspect of limited access is seen as an obvious task for libraries as they could contribute with their facilities and expertise in the field and already serve a similar function of providing information to the public. As the librarian from American Cultural Centre explains: *"The information poor will be poorer and the information rich will be richer unless there is a government policy. As librarians we feel that the only way you can get information to the people is through public community libraries and if the government will support that, it will reach out. Where else would you have a centre with facilities that will be free for people?"*<sup>199</sup> To count on the libraries to reach out to the communities sounds reasonable and is already happening, for instance at UNAM, where they try to serve their 'community duty', although on a still very limited scale. Community based workshops, targeting members of the public with interest in Internet is meant to develop further, when the largely planned International Resource Centre (IRC) in form of a new library at UNAM, will be at place next year. *"..it should be like a National library for references because it will have a more national outlook. So outreach to the community as far as the usage of its resources will be quite necessary (..) Being a new technology that is just being embraced it is only now that the policy makers are beginning to realise its essence. As part of its (UNAM's) community service through the various different UNAM centres access is also envisaged(..) these centres are sort of community based focal point through which access can be provided to the various different communities."*<sup>200</sup> These places of access will, if the increasingly networked librarians are promoting it intensively, maybe become the 'solution' to the lack of access in Namibia - if the government give it priority and the people show interest as well. Several times we heard about the almost absent reading culture in Namibia<sup>201</sup> as a constraint against the initiatives of using the libraries to offer the Internet to the population.

### **Knowledge**

*"(..) library staff have been able to state their Internet needs very clearly such that they cannot be ignored. This is only possible if staff have sufficient and appropriate Internet related knowledge and skills to enable them to state their needs and argue their case*

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<sup>198</sup> See chapter 2

<sup>199</sup> Interview with Venna, information rich and poor

<sup>200</sup> Fred, timecode 410, 425, 565

<sup>201</sup> Interview with Venna, interview with Louie

clearly.”<sup>202</sup>

The quote above clearly shows the role of education in the empowerment process -if you know what you want and you know how to argue your needs the results will come to you easier. Librarians at UNAM know how to argue for their needs and they get it.

To be able to state a need for Internet as in the above example, can be taken to a further level: The more information, the more knowledge a group of people have about their case, the easier it will be for them to come through with their arguments. Also it supports the notion that people who already know something about Internet naturally find it easier to state their needs than the people who do not. The already knowing will forever be ahead and serious considerations have to be taken if the knowledge of the 'Internet empowered elite' should benefit the society as a whole and not just stay within the privileged minority.

The knowledge about Internet that the librarians possess provides possibilities. They are now handling the training programmes in the government, which shows that their competencies are being recognised. A librarian says: “..most of the guests are from the Prime Minister's office. And most people who came were planning to introduce Internet to all the staff there. They send those interested to come and learn over here and probably from that they also train other people out there.”<sup>203</sup> That the library serves the government in this way might give some advantages in return when arguing that more resources should be channelled to the library. The mere sign of recognition shows that the library is competent in the field and worth counting on in the future. This serves as an example of the capacity shown from well-equipped and well-trained library staff, which could be an incentive to channel more resources to the library sector in general. Also it is an example of co-operation between institutions within the area, one favour deserves another and the people with knowledge enable others to be introduced to the Internet. Such an **empowering circle** is very valuable in a society where resources are scarce and knowledge limited. If powerful keypersons get the right training the number of people benefiting from that training will be multiplied if the knowledge is not only kept inside a small circle, but spread out to other people who crave it.

Another positive aspect concerning knowledge is that information on the Internet is now available to everybody with access – being unemployed, student, professor or minister. IT at public places even enables people coming from outside the educational system to access Internet and in that way participate in the distribution of resources.

One consequence of the above is also how the Internet has potentials to change the dichotomy of the all knowing teacher and the not knowing student in the traditional

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<sup>202</sup> Chisenga, Justin: Surfing..

<sup>203</sup> Fred, timecode 490

teacher/student relationship. Information and knowledge is no longer restricted to the fortunate people with books, but can be retrieved by other means – chosen by the student and not by the teacher. In some case the students can even master more skills than the teachers in the field of Internet, for example the teachers managing the computer training for teachers at UNAM. The "underdogs" are becoming "overdogs". School Net is also based on the idea that the students have to be in charge of the new media, whereby the traditional generation gap between teacher and student, old and young, will be turned upside down.

### **Need?**

Another important factor is the question about necessity of Internet. From the governments point of view the Internet is a necessity - some schools are just not aware of it yet.<sup>204</sup> The schools that feel an actual need will probably put a huge effort in the acquisition of Internet and will somehow manage to raise the money for it. The others will rapidly lack more behind.

At least two groups of people - with different priorities - has to be considered in the NEED discussion: "*..some people will value information as a powerful tool, other people have the basic needs, they have to survive,(..), information to them is a luxury they are not worried about unless you can come to them and say, you can plant your seed, produce more, them probably they can get interested. (..) right now some people still see computers as luxury.*"<sup>205</sup> The librarian here has got it right - information need to be felt relevant for people to be an absolute need. If information is seen as a luxury for the many, will they care about Internet if it does not solve any immediate problems? Does it have any relevance? Access to information can be interpreted in various ways, political information might be of need for some people, information about some innovative way to increase the harvest of a greater need for others. The paradox here is the fact that all kind of information is available in Namibia on the Internet, being academic, political or agricultural information. It is all there and even if the farmer do not directly feel any benefits from Internet he might in the long run benefit from the knowledge others will retrieve in an area useful and relevant for not only one farmer, but for many of them.

### **Trained to feel a need?**

One lecturer at UNAM has a clear opinion of how Internet can become a need:

*"I remember when I was young there was this company selling Maggie cubes. They were going from house to house in one month distributing them free of charge (...) And when they stopped – you know they were so nice – so we started going to the shops to buy the Maggie cubes. (...) What I mean is the information available on the net can be marketed to the people and the people will start to feel they need to access the Internet. If you start a need, it*

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<sup>204</sup> Interview with Alfred von Kent

<sup>205</sup> Interview with Venna, need

*will definitely continue to be. (a need, red.)*<sup>206</sup>

The question is if it is possible to compare Maggie cubes and Internet, the cost involved being very different. But the theory of **establishing a need** is there, like with the School Net initiative, where the people behind seem to be so convinced about the wonders of Internet that they want all the schools to realise the same need. What they do is to create a dependency, to create a need that is sought to be maintained - like with the Maggie cubes.

*"You don't know what you are missing, it is like never eating chocolate before, you won't miss it if you never had it, because you don't know what it is like"*<sup>207</sup> and later: *"(..)The need will be greater if more people are aware of the Internet, because there is a lot of people that don't even know what the Internet is (..) so there is a big problem with Internet awareness."*

<sup>208</sup> The quote is from a Microsoft expert running computer courses and devoted to the idea that people will definitely feel a need for Internet as soon as they get aware of it. But is it a problem that people are not aware? According to UNDP's optimistic approach the unawareness is a problem. Training in the educational system is the solution. As said, it will promote a society rich on information - hungry to get more.<sup>209</sup> Training will enable people to realise the possibilities with Internet, enable them to use it and perhaps even make them enjoy it and see the relevance of it. A need will be established. This point of view blesses the Internet as a tool, which will be indispensable first you become acquainted with it. Our empirical findings show that the educational sector in Namibia supports this approach. Training, for instance at UNAM, is seen as the important aspect that will make people use the Internet - no matter if the request is there a need will be forced upon them.

Not everybody sees it this way: *"Even if you have free access to information and you as a person aren't motivated I don't think you will do it."*<sup>210</sup> As this student mentions, motivation is a crucial aspect if all this new information has to be of any use. If people have not internalised a need for critical information why should the Internet be used that way? A need to be aware of political issues does probably not arise in front of the computer if the interest has never been there before.

## **Participation**

*"An increased flow of information will also increase Africa's participation in the global dialogue on issues such as the environment, human rights and democratisation."*<sup>211</sup> - a hope

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<sup>206</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga, timecode 377-396 site A2

<sup>207</sup> Interview with Louie, timecode 095, tape 2

<sup>208</sup> Interview with Louie, timecode 204

<sup>209</sup> See chapter 2

<sup>210</sup> Interview with Victoria, timecode 217

<sup>211</sup> 4. Harnessing information technology for development, Info and comm tech in Africa, paragraph 3. UNDP

from UNDP that Internet will encourage participation both nationally and globally.

What we have found in the empirical data leaves us with a twisted answer: Yes, it happens - some people participate in debates, like for instance the lecturer in Communication at UNAM, Justin Chisenga, though on a professional level more than a political one. The Internet has given him possibilities of getting in contact with different organisations inside and outside Namibia. As Holderness says, ideography replaces geography,<sup>212</sup> meaning that Internet makes possibilities for interests to combine people instead of physical location. As Chisenga participates in various discussion groups his name is being known in the right circles- he is now being invited to participate in International conferences and has suddenly become a member of the UNESCO committee for websites 1999 - over the Internet. Through his own website he provides all his publications online to spread his words to a wider audience.<sup>213</sup> People around the world searching for materials about Internet and Africa will almost automatically see the name Justin Chisenga on top of the list if they visit UNAM's webpage. All this creates possibilities for Chisenga as a person, but still as a part of the University and thereby also Namibia. He 'shows the flag' so to speak and as a representative from Namibia he makes the world aware of the nation, the situation - and some opinions about Internet on the African continent.<sup>214</sup>

Apart from the above example our interviews do not support the tendency, a student even denies that any connection between Internet and democracy is to find at all, it is 'more of a social thing', she says.<sup>215</sup> This is interesting according to the visions for the 'New Namibia' after independence,<sup>216</sup> as one of the main visions was to encourage a more reflective and critical approach through the educational system to enable the citizens to participate fully in a democratic Namibia.

Our observations at UNAM were predominantly characterised by lack of interest and reaction among the students, not even the limited amount of computers assessable made the students protest and crave more resources given. Some of them were unhappy about the situation, but no one 'stood up for their democratic rights'.<sup>217</sup> When we asked about what could be done to improve the situation no student gave an answer, only one mumbled something about 'making a march' - after having had some time to think. A believed ability to change decisions or to fight for additional resources was not present in any of our conversations at UNAM.

### **Participation via Internet - or just participating?**

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<sup>212</sup> See Chapter 2

<sup>213</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga, timecode 396-407

<sup>214</sup> Interview with J. Chisenga and bibliography

<sup>215</sup> Interview with Victorie, timecode 215

<sup>216</sup> Confirm Chapter 3

<sup>217</sup> Interview with Victoria, timecode 280

In the discussion of improved **participation after** the implementation of Internet the level of **participation before** has to be considered, having in mind the above example with the students.

According to the critical approach <sup>218</sup> the crucial aspect of participation is how relevant information from the Internet is understood and used - used as intended if the Internet should be of any relevance for democracy. Important for the 'right use' is the question of an already existing culture of critical thinking and seeking for information - again a need for what is out there has to be at place before the information will be of any relevance. *"Changes are also necessary in attitudes about information and its use - creating cultures that are information hungry and information sharing,"* <sup>219</sup> explains UNDP. If the 'information hungry' cultures are not there the big question is: Will Internet change that attitude? Should it? And will increased access to information lead to democracy?

### **Towards democracy? - Spread the word!**

*"The people who have access to Internet would be just a small portion of the people and democracy does not consist of a small portion. For a country to be democratic every citizen has to be informed. How do you inform every citizen if more than half of their citizens can not even afford the money to get even newspapers, let alone a computer?"* <sup>220</sup> This question from a librarian is of serious relevance as the mere being in a position with access to information should include a kind of gatekeeper function - to allow the 'information poor' to take part of the information as well.

The librarians at the UNAM library is one example where the ones with access to information will be the ones to decide and sort out which information should be handed over and spread among others. This can be seen as an overall problem concerning the relation between those with access to information and those without - the less fortunate do not choose themselves, but have to be satisfied with what they get. In a real democratic society the major population should have access to information, as Venna from the American Cultural Centre say: *"We should make provisions for the people out there, because you can't have one half of the country informed and the other half of the country does not know what is happening - unless you want to rule some people who have no idea of what you are doing. And then you will be the wiser one to tell them what is happening."* <sup>221</sup>

The hope for the future of Internet will involve an empowering circle where it will solely depend on the educated elite to contribute to the development of an information community

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<sup>218</sup> Confirm Chapter 2

<sup>219</sup> UNDP: The Secretary-General's Special Initiative on Africa: 4. Harnessing information technology for development, Info and comm tech in Africa, paragraph 4.

<sup>220</sup> Interview with Venne, education

<sup>221</sup> Interview with Venna, timecode information rich/poor

that benefits society as a whole.<sup>222</sup> Equality in access to computers is maybe unrealistic, therefore the educational sector has to strongly consider the potentials of the Internet not only for themselves on the individual school, but for the society as a whole if the Internet should be of any relevance in a democratisation process.

## **6. Analysis of Media-institutions part 1&2**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The Windhoek declaration was as mentioned adopted in May 1991 by all SADC heads of state, UNESCO General Assembly, the UN General Assembly and it embraces various aspects of the concept "free press". Article 1 says:

*"Consistent with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development."*<sup>223</sup>

One of the sectors we have chosen to investigate in our attempt to give an answer to our problem definition is as mentioned the media sector. This sector was chosen since we consider its' societal role crucial in relation to democracy and also that we expected that there was a reasonably extended use of ICT.

A brief outline of the media situation in Namibia today:

Newspapers: Four dailies, two weeklies, and one bi-weekly, which is a SWAPO newspaper. Television and radio: The Namibian Broad Cast (NBC) which is state owned, is the only nationally broadcast television apart from commercial satellite- and cable television. Besides that, NBC transmits national radio. To this there are several commercial radio-channels and also local community radio stations.

We have made personal interviews with: The NGO Media Institute of Southern Africa that aims to sustain the goals of the Windhoek declaration. Apart from MISA we have visited Katutura Community Radio, also an NGO. The Namibian, a national independent daily newspaper written in English. Allgemeine Zeitung, a national daily newspaper written in German and Die Republikein, which is also a national daily and written in Afrikaans. All the above-mentioned institutions have Internet-access and use it professionally to various degrees.

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<sup>222</sup> Chapter 2, The South Approach

<sup>223</sup> Windhoek Declaration Article 1. The Windhoek Declaration consists in 15 Articles in total.

**Our analysis is according to our problemdefinition divided in two parts.**

The first part gives an answer to **how the institutions use the Internet and how the use of the Internet conduces to empowering the institutions.** In this part of the analysis we have chosen to divide our cases in alternative media i.e. NGOs and mainstream media i.e. newspapers. Each chapter introduces the respective institutions and gives a brief description of their objectives. To find out about the institutions' actual use it has been necessary for us to look in to **Information-flows** i.e. what information is coming in from the Internet and what information is going out onto the Internet, and where is it actually possible to refer to interactive communication. Thus we focus on research and news collecting on the Internet, news-distribution & web-sites and information going out via e-mail. Apart from that we discuss constraints and resistance towards the Internet.

In the second part of the analysis we elaborate on the answers from part one and consider them in relation to the theories described in chapter 2 and 3 of our report, and relate it all to the democratisation process in Namibia.

## **6.2 Analysis of Alternative media and NGOs - Part 1, institutional level**

### **Introduction of Media Institute of Southern Africa and Katutura Community Radio**

MISA was officially launched in 1992 and is a regional NGO with members in 11 of the SADC countries. The Windhoek chapter has 8 employees and 13 computers - all with access to the Internet. MISA's main objectives are to promote free, independent and pluralistic media in the region as was determined in the 1991 Windhoek Declaration. Apart from that MISA is also working for a free flow of information and co-operation between media workers with the principal aim to nurture democracy and human rights in the region. MISA acts on media freedom violations by sending out alerts on the Internet when media-workers' human rights are abused. They work on improving the news exchange in the SADC region and have their own indigenous news agency MISAnet. Another core activity of MISA is getting other media institutions connected to the Internet<sup>224</sup>.

Katutura Community Radio Station (KCR) was started as a NGO initiative in 1995<sup>225</sup>. The station was established to facilitate community development through participatory democracy as a medium for better communication and information sharing. As part of this process, KCR aims to demystify radio through community participation in programme production<sup>226</sup>. KCR has evolved to become a voice of the black and coloured neighbourhoods

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<sup>224</sup> Interview with Raasheid Galant and information from <http://www.misanet.org/info.htm>

<sup>225</sup> KCR has been supported by i.e. UNICEF, Ibis and Dutch NGOs.

<sup>226</sup> Annual Activity Report - Katutura Community Radio/January-December 1997

of Windhoek, Katatura and Komestahl.

In the beginning only music was aired, but later talk shows were introduced. Today KCR broadcasts news four times a day. The priority of news is local and international news. In the local sphere KCR sheds light to things that seem to be handled unfair by the Government and ask the Government critical questions on such matters. The answers given by the Government are then broadcast to the people.

KCR has 7 employees including the program editor, the executive director and two persons in charge of administration. In addition there are about 40-50 volunteers. The volunteers are doing the programs helped by the staff.

KCR has two computers donated by UNICEF, one for administrative purposes and one for the news team. They were connected to the Internet in 1996-97, and the volunteers can use the Internet by permission.

### **Research and news-collecting on WWW and via mailing lists**

Asking Raasheid at MISA about how he uses the Internet in his work resulted in some of the following: *"I don't know what to do without the Internet ... I depend on the Internet for information all the time ... I've got a collection of bookmarks that I'm very proud of, that is in categories ... This week I needed to know who was the minister of ... in Angola so I've got a bookmark already so I can just go there"*<sup>227</sup> and he also points out that he has quite a few bookmarks on various universities and media-institutions. He is also a member of various mailing lists about Media, left-wing activities, Marxism and Africa. To us it is quite clear that he uses these mailing lists strategically in his job. Besides it tells us something about how difficult it is to divide Internet usage between work and privacy since the information Raasheid obtains from the different mailing-list all form part of his total knowledge and it is this knowledge he uses in his work at MISA. Since MISA uses Internet as a central tool it is also through the Internet that he/they spread their messages, this will be included in one of the following paragraphs.

At KCR the most important thing the Internet is used for is collecting International news. Bryan explains that the Internet helps KCR to give their listeners news they would not be able to get from the national news-source NBC<sup>228</sup>. Bryan explains: *"One example I can give you is that, the relationship that is about to cripple between Nigeria, you know, and Namibia, we really got to know about it from the Internet ... but it wasn't on the local news - even not on the national level ... so that I'm trying to get stories that has to do with Namibia, that even we don't happen to know about. So it is an opportunity to us!"*<sup>229</sup>

According to a listener-questionnaire people are happy about the international news, and Bryan thinks it further adds to the number of KCR listeners. Through the web KFC access information from the UN i.e. information on environmental issues, women issues etc for

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<sup>227</sup> Interview with Raasheid Galant timecode 305 to 335 side a.

<sup>228</sup> State owned Namibian Broadcast Corporation

<sup>229</sup> Interview with Bryan timecode 165 to 174 side A

their programs. As he puts it: *"We have the women programs of, you know, issues that affect women in other countries, things that have been done in other countries ... how we can relate it to our women here. How it can be a lesson to them here also."*<sup>230</sup> KCR has bookmarks on BBC-world, Channel Africa, Sportpages, Netscape-mail etc. Through Channel Africa KCR gets to know about what is going on in the rest of Africa and they also subscribe to Richard Brooks mailing list, which is a news-list.

The Internet is also used for personal matters, such as people reading news.

Thus, KCR uses the information from the Internet in their broadcasts. They expose situations, which are not exposed to the public in other media and thereby they raise possibilities for alternative debates in the public.

### **News-distribution and Web-sites**

Asking at MISA why the Internet is important as a tool Raasheid explains that in the early nineties information was dominated by the North. It was news about the North or by the North. For people in the region to get news from their neighbour countries without having to consult one of the Western news agencies was almost impossible. He elaborates and refers to MISA's news-agency MISAnet: *"People in Swaziland were depending on Reuters for news on Namibia ... People in South Africa were depending on AFP ... for news from Zimbabwe - which is unforgivable! ... this (MISAnet red.) was what you call the South/South information"*.<sup>231</sup> Raasheid finds that with MISAnet this situation has been improved.

MISAnet is a barter-system news-exchange between independent newspapers in Southern Africa. I.e. different newspapers supply and collect information free of charge. Establishing MISAnet has been one of MISA's main objectives and it is a service, which MISA will commercialise in the near future. This is part of a plan that should give independence to MISA from their donors and thus MISAnet will be one of MISA's main income sources in the future. Besides, it is quite clear that MISA by using the Internet is working in accordance with their objectives and that there is a need for the information was easily observed when buying a daily newspaper for example 'The Namibian' which often refers to MISA-net.

The MISA website<sup>232</sup> which gives you information about the institution, action alerts, MISA-net, books you can order etc. was also subject for our analysis and we asked if there was any strategy about how to use the site in the future and how it works now? To this Raasheid gets a little hesitant and explains that the employees at MISA have not discussed the site for a while, and the only new thing happening on the site is the alerts. The alerts are put on the site by him via an automatic system and as he explains: *"The thing about it also is, that the alerts as they happen, we have an automated system ... so our alerts get instantaneously uploaded up to the website ... and that makes things very easy and it also makes us quite lazy about*

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<sup>230</sup> Interview with Bryan, timecode 261 to 264 side A

<sup>231</sup> Interview with Raasheid Galant timecode 227 to 232 side a.

<sup>232</sup> MISA website can be found at: <http://www.misanet.org>

*looking at anything else because we know our web-site is always being updated in a sense ...*"<sup>233</sup>

This statement tells us something about MISA's priorities. The alerts are very important and also one of the reasons for MISA getting so much attention, but the site as a whole is not being paid much attention. MISA-net cannot be entered from the site<sup>234</sup> so the most crucial reason to go back there is to find out about the alerts.

At KCR the web-site is currently non-existing, but KCR hopes to get donor resources to start it. The reason given for this is other countries needs, such as Zimbabwe, to know what is going on in Namibia. Bryan mentions topics such as how the development process is going and whether the Namibians are *"still under colonial masters"*.<sup>235</sup>

### **E-mail**

Apart from the use of the mailing lists, asking more specifically about how they communicate via e-mail Raasheid explains, that it is his most vital means of communication. He uses it to forward information to colleagues and to various mailing lists about for example Gender and Women, Gay right issues and The Rainbow organisation. The lists he mentions are a mixture of profession related lists and private interest. At KCR the story is a bit different, email is used but very limited. As Brian puts it: *"With e-mail we don't so much unless there are some to write to, maybe our donors or this - we do not do sending e-mail."*<sup>236</sup> Analysing the e-mail usage it is obvious that the e-mail is used differently depending on which NGO we are looking at. MISA uses e-mail as mentioned to inform colleagues about their findings on the net etc but also for research and apart from that to communicate in general. At KCR there seems to be little use of email which could have something to do with poor training but also that they only have one computer which is used for research 7 hours a day (possibly also other services, but that we do not know). Nevertheless in both instances the NGOs use email to communicate with their donors which is quite crucial since the donors so far are the ones making these NGOs a reality.

### **Constraints and resistance**

According to Brian from KCR there is always a queue in front of the computer due to the lack of computers. He expresses a clear hope for more equipment, which he hopes the donors will supply. But as he also explains, the telephone bill has increased substantially and this is a problem for KCR, since they might not have enough economic resources in the future to cover the use of the Internet as it is now. To this Bryan points out, that they probably will have to limit the use since too many volunteers just seem to use the Internet for personal

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<sup>233</sup> Interview with Raasheid Galant timecode 425 to 435 side a

<sup>234</sup> To enter MISA-net you must be part of the barter-system or you must subscribe to it.

<sup>235</sup> Interview with Bryan, timecode 384 to 385

matters which was not the intention of getting connected. Apart from that he finds that there are general problems with the Internet i.e. that it is too slow and if it is trustworthy or not. It could lead to problems if KCR unintentionally chose to use invalid information. At MISA the case is rather different. The worries are on another level, such as if the information that MISA puts out on the net reach the people and even if it does (through i.e. other media institutions) are the people then able to use this information. This will be elaborated in part two of the analysis.

### **Sub-conclusion**

From the statements and observations we have learned that the Internet is crucial to MISA in fulfilling their objectives. They use the media strategically and would have a very hard time without it. The news-agency MISAnet would not be a reality and the alerts would be very hard and expensive to spread via telephone and fax. They also use the Internet to form a media-community in Southern African when they wire other media-institutions. In spreading the message about violation of human rights and promoting freedom of speech MISA has been very effective and the Internet has helped them a lot in reaching their target group. Apart from that they have received a lot of financial support from i.e. Danida in Denmark<sup>237</sup> due to their effectiveness. It is questionable if MISA would have obtained this amount without being able to use the Internet. MISA is also depending on the Internet in the future when they commercialise MISAnet and without the Internet or donor-money they might not survive. So Internet is very empowering to MISA - we could state that this media is necessary for them to obtain their objectives but also necessary for their very survival as a News agency.

Overall the Internet has empowered KCR. Even though there are several constraints, the Internet gives them an opportunity to have a wider selection of programs with educational and information purposes. Entering the information into their programs they try to "enlighten" their listeners with new ideas and ways of doing things. Letting the volunteers use the Internet gives the youngsters the possibility to enter information sources they otherwise would not be able to, and indirectly it gives them training in using the new media. The e-mail function gives KCR the possibility to have an effective communication-flow between themselves and their donors, nevertheless we cannot say if this has really improved KCR's situation because telephones could maybe do the same. KCR could probably survive without the Internet, but it is a very central tool for KCR to maintain the variety they currently have in their programs. Stressing that, the educational programs are the ones that legitimise the continued donor funding. We find that with the Internet KCR has and make use of the possibility to enter new sources of information and recontextualize it into a local setting. Thus they are able to give their listeners new ideas and perspectives on how to

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<sup>236</sup> Interview with Bryan, timecode 256 to 259 side A

<sup>237</sup> Danida have donated 14,8 mio. dkr. in the period 1998-2002  
(Danidanyt/Danish Foreign Ministry)

handle local problems.

### **6.3 Analysis of formal media, Newspapers - Part 1, institutional level**

#### **Introduction and objectives, The Namibian, Die Republikein and Allgemeine Zeitung**

The Namibian is a national independent newspaper written in English, but it also has a small section in Oshiwambo. It sells around 15,000 to 20,000 copies a day.

It started out in 1985 as a "voice for the voiceless" supporting SWAPO in their political struggle. Its objectives were mainly to comment on the oppressive political situation in the country under South African administration. Today it is "still telling it as it is", which is also the slogan of the newspaper. Even though it has become more main-stream to make profit it still takes its' responsibility as a watchdog very serious.

There are around 50 employees in different departments with 37 computers all connected to the Internet.<sup>238</sup>

Die Republikein is a privately owned newspaper, which covers and distributes to the whole country, but the news is mainly focused on Windhoek. Every other week they distribute local newspapers in the North written in Oshiwambo and Portuguese. According to Herma, Die Republikein is the biggest daily newspaper<sup>239</sup>. It is written in Afrikaans, and sells approximately 15,000 copies a day. The objectives of the paper are mainly to service the Afrikaans speaking readers and also to make a profit.

There are about 50 employees. They have various computers but only one in the editorial section has a dial up Internet connection. The computer was connected in 1996-97, and is online about 5 hours a day.

The Allgemeine Zeitung is a privately owned national newspaper written in German. On a daily basis about 5000 copies are published, and most of the subscribers are 'over seas'. Their main objective is to represent the German minority and otherwise to function as a commercial newspaper. Allgemeine Zeitung has recently started a youth section, as they find that the newspapers in general overlook the youth. This is also initiated to hopefully get more subscribers. The newspaper has 15 people employed in the editorial. They have several computers and 2 of them are connected to the Internet. One computer is placed at a secretary's desk and the second computer is for the rest of the staff to share. The computers are on-line about 12 hours a day and there are no official rules to the use of the Internet. As a common decision Allgemeine Zeitung got connected to the Internet in 1997. The reason for this decision was that: *A We couldn't drag our feet, just relax and see it happening in other*

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<sup>238</sup> Interview with Helge Schutz (journalist) and Jörn Scaby (IT-responsible and IT-manager) The Namibian

<sup>239</sup> To readers information: The Namibian also claims to be the biggest.

places, and not catching up."<sup>240</sup>

### **Research and news-collecting on WWW and via mailing lists.**

Asking about how the Internet was used and how much a day we obviously got different answers depending on who we asked. The sports-journalist who uses the Internet around 1 hour a day explains: *"It depends what stories you are busy with ... average one hour a day ... say when they had the world athletics championships; all the major sporting events ... I got IAAF's website. They had all the results ... they were very fast so it's quite nice ... whenever there is a big thing, say Wimbledon, The Rugby world cup - I have downloaded or got all those websites so that helps a lot, but still for local news you can't really use that so well ... but for international news we use it quite a lot"*.<sup>241</sup>

To the same question the IT-responsible answers: *"... per day three hours on average, and I'd be looking for product specifications, I'd be looking for updates, I'd be looking for servicepacks, news sometimes ... anything and everything related to my job as IT-manager and as webmaster"*.<sup>242</sup>

These statements tell us that the Internet is being used quite extensively at The Namibian but also very specifically in relation to what function the person has or what story the person is looking for. The effectiveness and fastness is naturally very important to the journalist who is working in accordance to the deadlines of the paper. But it is also important to the webmaster because he has to update the site and is therefor naturally using more time on the net - from three to eight hours a day.

Both interviewees express that there is a need for the Internet and also that they now have more information sources. The IT-manager obviously finds it indispensable since surfing and updating the site is part of his job. Their usage of the Internet is actually interrelated since what Helge finds on sports Jörn will be putting out on the net, and what Jörn finds (of software or new web-designs for the site) will influence on Helge's working conditions and possibilities in the future. The e-mail function is used at a daily basis and our interviewees inform us that they use it as members of various mailing-lists such as economic lists, sports lists and software lists.

At Die Republikein the Internet is primarily used by Herma (journalist and web-master) and the on-line computer is placed at her desk. E-mail is used to receive news from correspondents situated in other parts of the country. The www is used to check the South African newspapers' web pages, in the search of interesting news. The news is not used directly (cut & paste) but is re-edited. Herma adds: *Information on the Internet is not 100%*

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<sup>240</sup> Interview with Halbich Allgemeine (journalist), timecode 030 to 035 side A

<sup>241</sup> Interview with Helge Schutz The Namibian timecode 195 to 209 side A.

<sup>242</sup> Interview with Jörn Scaby/The Namibian timecode 376 to 381 side A

*accurate, you can never be sure of it*.<sup>243</sup> Once in a while editorial staff does research on the Internet, but according to Herma the majority of the staff, including the main editor, are computer illiterate. Herma considers this as an obstacle, which explains why the Internet is generally not a high priority, and considered an expense as opposed to a valuable tool among the majority of the staff.

According to the sub-editor Halbich from Allgemeine Zeitung maximum 5 people use the www professionally on a daily basis. Those 5 journalists gather information for the sports section, for society-gossip, for the Africa section and for International news.

The most used service on the Internet is the e-mail. Mailing-lists are used to gather information on what is going on in South Africa, to be regularly informed about alerts via MISA's site, and to get data on the local stock exchange. But according to Halbich the mailing-lists are not considered a reliable source of information, and he explains that: *A mailing lists are also very dangerous, they can be very dangerous, because interest groups may just make use of it for their own purposes. And if you just take it over as it is (to the newspaper), it could be rather detrimental.*<sup>244</sup>

The Internet is also used for getting news from the German news agency Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA) and from Inter Press Service<sup>245</sup> (IPS) which is considered good for heavy and time-consuming news. Allgemeine takes over features etc. from IPS and since IPS writes in several languages including German, it makes it easier for Allgemeine to use the information directly in the newspaper.

The Internet is also used to gather information on organisations acting internationally as well as nationally and on different governments. Halbich states: *AI t is just a click of a mouse and you're in. That has not been the case before, we relied very much on press releases and the possibilities were very limited.*<sup>246</sup> On the other hand, later he explains: *"If there is information I need, it is not that I would immediately jump up and log on to the net. I would rather find out by someone else or I will phone, because that is still much quicker than the net."*<sup>247</sup> Besides that, he explains that there is never a queue in front of the on-line computer and that the Internet is used just as much for personal matters as for professional. Halbich thinks that The Internet mainly has been an advantage in the International context in that the Internet has made the acquisition of news cheaper and easier to the access and now the newspaper has the possibility to obtain last-minute updates. But in a local context it has not changed things a lot, as local stuff still ticks in on press releases.

## **News-distribution and Web-sites**

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<sup>243</sup> Interview with Herma/Die Republikein, timecode 340 to 342 side A

<sup>244</sup> Interview with Halbich/Allgemeine Zeitung, timecode 200 to 203 side A.

<sup>245</sup> Inter Press Service is a news-agency concentrating on the South.

<sup>246</sup> Interview with Halbich/Allgemeine timecode 070 to 074 side A.

<sup>247</sup> Interview with Halbich, timecode 426 to 430 side A.

Asking Helge about what the goals were for getting connected, he mainly focuses on the importance of being present on the Internet - referring to The Namibian's web-site. The Namibian has quite an advanced site which is updated and maintained by the news-editor and Jörn.<sup>248</sup> Apart from resuming headline stories of the day, offering an archive over recent articles, supplying links to other newspaper in SADC etc. the site gives the readers opportunity to interact.

Helge explains: *"What Jörn has done now which maybe wasn't thought of initially, is he's started a lot of "whiteboards", which are these kind of interactive kind of sites, but it's about specific topics like the upcoming election or the "Brave Warriors soccer team" - there is something like at least 20 subjects now. And it has daily or weekly barometers asking people what do you think about this and that - and they are very popular - we get a lot of hits on that. It's nearly like a new media-system you know ... and eventually it would be nice to make money out of it."*<sup>249</sup> Added to this Jörn mentions that the government ministers are aware of the white-boards and use them.

We find that the site and new technology has made it possible for the Namibian to discuss subjects directly with their readers and thereby to stay in touch with the public opinion. Though keeping in mind that only few are able to participate on-line due to the limited amount of citizens with Internet access. So by this the Internet has helped the Namibian to create a forum where citizens can reveal their opinions directly to the politicians. This has given credibility to the Namibian and their reputation as a watchdog has hereby been strengthened. The site has also made it possible for The Namibian to give information to the outside world about what is going on in the country, meaning that in total the number of readers has increased.

At Die Republikein the web site is updated with news every morning. The on-line news is mainly published in Afrikaans, but also in English to some extent. The updated news are the main stories of the days newspaper that could be of interest also to people outside of Namibia. According to the responses received by e-mail, the web page is used by local people outside of Windhoek, who do not receive the newspaper till late afternoon due to the distribution system. Die Republikein is aware that the site is used by Namibians living abroad, South Africans and Dutch linguists and in the future Die Republikein furthermore has plans of using the web-site for advertisements, to earn money from it, but at the moment it is not making any profit.

Algemeine Zeitung is currently working on a web-site. A web page is considered valuable as another way of gathering capital via on-line advertisements. Otherwise the target group are subscribers in and outside Namibia, Namibians in general, regular visitors and experts. The web page is planned to cover news from the newspaper, a tourist page and a youth section.

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<sup>248</sup> The site can be found at: <http://www.namibian.com.na>

<sup>249</sup> Interview with Helge/The Namibian, timecode 147 to 158 side A.

We find that generally, the newspapers take the question of web-sites quite seriously, some more than others though. It seems to be a trend in the newspaper industry<sup>250</sup> and if you do not have a web-site you are considered to be out of touch with time. As one of the interviewees also points out even the connection to the Internet was not really considered crucial, more like something the paper had to do, to be up to date. So for quite a few the actual job-related need for the Internet is more of a "not being left behind" than it is an explicit and urgent need for new information sources. To this it is very important to mention that the newspapers all subscribe to NAMPA, which is the Namibian Press agency that also co-operates with all the Western News agencies, such as Reuters, AFP, AP etc., and the information from NAMPA is transmitted via another computer net-work.

### **E-mail**

The Namibian supplies information via email to MISA-net and Africa On-line in USA. MISA-net is as explained in last chapter a barter-system where newspapers supply and collect information free of charge, but Africa On-line pays The Namibian for the information. We find that with email The Namibian has new income-possibilities but how much they actually make on this we do not know.

At Die Republikein the one on-line computer is placed at a secretary's desk, and is also used for e-mails, though to a limited degree. I.e. the editorial staff who knows how to operate the computer sends emails, in stead of using the fax.

At Allgemeine Halbich uses the Internet professionally on a daily basis about one hour, and as he explains he mainly uses it for sending e-mails. To whom we unfortunately do not know.

### **Constraints and resistance**

All the newspapers mention to various degrees that they have problems with training and that the staff simply does not have the interest or time to engage in the new possibilities arising with the Internet. At the Namibian they take this quite serious and Jörn has even dedicated himself to training some of the staff. Nevertheless, at the other newspapers, it seemed that they were aware of this barrier but did not really do anything about it. Also among the staff who do know about the Internet and do use it, resistance was found but that was mainly centred around the unreliability of the information found on the Internet. Apart from this a couple of our interviewees considers the Internet "to slow" and as they also point out, the staff does not have sufficient time to engage in the possibilities the Internet gives. This tells us, that if the papers really want the Internet to be used professionally they have to invest more time and money in training, technology and the field in general. To do this there must be someone who pushes for this to happen and as we also found, the ones who advocates for ICT today are the people who already have an interest and thus a need to improve on the

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<sup>250</sup> As in the North, interview with Helge/The Namibian timecode ...

Internet-situation. Added to this there is the whole economical aspect, which could be problematic if the newspapers are running with tight budgets. We did not ask about this.

### **Sub-conclusion**

For The Namibian Internet has empowered them with the possibility of having a site and thereby the paper has entered a new era of communication. The newspaper is investing in new technology to become accessible to more people world-wide and at a smaller scale also to more people nationally. As our interviewees explain: *"You need to be present on the web - it's becoming like that"*<sup>251</sup> or *"... from here we are trying to make an on-line community in Namibia ... by doing on-line voting and discussion forums."*<sup>252</sup> Thus, The Namibian uses the Internet to create a new profile as an on-line newspaper. But also to expand and give previously not possible services, and previously not available information to the increasing number of readers. The Internet is a very central tool in this. Nevertheless it is not transparent whether the Internet-connectivity is a financial benefit or cost to the newspaper. To this must be added that our observations at the newspaper were also, that a lot of the optimism has arisen quite recently and a lot of it is directly related to the future. One of the interviews took place in the room of the computer with direct access to above-mentioned NAMPA and it seemed that there was quite a heavy run on that computer.

At Die Republikein the Internet is not as empowering as Herma wishes for. Due to lack of skills among the staff the majority is not using the net. The lack of skills mean that the staff does not have any significant interest in using the Internet and do not know what it can be used for. This has naturally meant that it has very low priority - even at a high organisational level within the institution. Nevertheless Die Republikein does have a web-site which enables them to compete with other national newspapers, for example The Namibian, in delivering early on-line news. Apart from that since the newspaper is in Africanns, Die Republikein has had the possibility to expand the number of readers in South Africa. Which again means that they take part in forming a Namibian profile to the outside world. This complies with the newspaper's objectives.

To Allgemeine the Internet has not changed their working-conditions significantly. The employees still prefer to use other media in their research. Nevertheless, it has given them more sources as far as international news is concerned even though they do not find it as time-effective as could be wished for. The employees are rather sceptical about the information found on the net, which means that they have to use time in cross-checking the information through other media. But the Internet has given the employees an extra fringe benefit, which in a long-term perspective could possibly motivate them to expand their use to using the facility more professionally. This must be seen in the light of the extended private use. When the Allgemeine web-site becomes a reality it will be possible for the newspaper to give their readers a better service, and also to attract more readers, but this is in the future.

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<sup>251</sup> Interview with Helge, timocode 148 to 149 side A.

<sup>252</sup> Interview with Jörn, timecode 024 to 031

Nevertheless it is positive in relation to the newspaper's objectives, which partly aim at the readers abroad but also for attracting young people, since they are the users of the Internet in the future. With the site in place it might also be possible for *Algemeine* to attract more advertisements and thereby capital. But for this to succeed the newspaper must invest more in this new media and also train personnel to maintain and elaborate the site.

## **6.4 Analysis of the Internet use in Media - Part 2, societal level**

### **Introduction**

As mentioned, in this second part of the analysis we use the answers from media part one, and relate them to a deeper discussion about **democracy in Namibia**. We draw on some of the answers we received from the media institutions and with these, we discuss in the light of the theories mentioned in chapter 2 and 3. Debates about the Internet in general and the constellation media, democracy and the Internet. We focus on communication-processes i.e. information collected from the Internet, information disseminated via the Internet and interactive communication spheres on the Internet. The way this is all linked to Namibia's democratisation process, is that we discuss the above-mentioned theories and the empirically collected answers in perspectives of the public, the media workers and politicians and government.

### **Research and news-collecting on the Internet disseminated to the public?**

The value of the media in bringing news in a democratic society can be seen from two perspectives. One is in the provision of national news, the other in relation to international news. National news can contribute to an awareness of the political and other societal processes and situations within the nation. In this sense the news can serve an educational purpose and possibly create public debates on societal issues. Furthermore national news enables people to follow national and local development and informing different groups within the society could possibly contribute to a wider understanding of other people within the nation and thus contribute to a feeling of collective national identity. International news can bring the outside world closer, and possibly introduce new ways of doing and thinking, and thus bring new ideas understandings and concepts to Namibia. Furthermore information about other countries can put the local context in a broader perspective, serving as a comparative.

In collecting national news, the Internet is only used to a limited degree, though it is used to investigate other national and regional media institutions' web pages, contributing as inspiration among and information exchange between national media institutions, thus expanding the circulation and possibly the dissemination of information. The Internet is furthermore of great importance in providing information on issues not presented at the national news agenda. As mentioned, Bryan from KCR has detected news of interest for Namibians on the Internet, not present at the national news agenda, and has spread this

information to a wider section of the society by broadcasting it in the radio. Thus the Internet is to some extent used to spread alternative information on Namibia, i.e. information not stemming from press releases or other regularly used news sources, and is thus adding to the plurality of news available to the public. This strengthens the media institutions' abilities to spread information that can lead to additional agendas of debate within the public. Still bearing in mind that media is a rather elitist phenomenon. Furthermore the wide variety of news sources available on the Internet can strengthen the media institutions' possibilities of maintaining their role as watch-dogs, and thus they can possibly obtain more recognition from the population.

When collecting international news, the Internet is used to a greater extent. Keeping in mind that other international news distributing networks exist and are used, the Internet has made a larger variety of international news sources available, thus possibly adding to the plurality of news issues disseminated in the media. Theoretically this can give the population information on how things are done in other places, and insight information about the surrounding world. But the actual consequences of the international news provided by the Internet in relation to Namibia's democratisation process depend on a number of factors. First of all there is the question of the relevance of the information. International news can naturally be of great value to the Namibians, as it can to any other population, but the selection and re-contextualisation of the international news provided are crucial issues. International news can spread ideas and provide information on how matters are dealt with in other countries, and can thus be used comparatively in reflecting upon the national or local situation by "well-educated" citizens. But due to the relatively low educational level of the majority of the Namibian population, this rather abstract use of the information on international news, to a large extent depends on the role of the journalist, i.e. in the re-contextualising and representation of the news. This process is time consuming and calls for well-trained journalists. According to David Ntengwe this issue is a rather big problem in Namibia, as journalists generally have low degrees of training and have to have the capital to go abroad to attain training courses etc.

Ntengwe finds that the Internet has influenced negatively on the quality of the media, especially the newspapers, due to lack of skills, and as he explains: "At the same time there is the Internet, which gives away news already done, properly written, professionally done (...) As long as it is something that has been properly packaged, they will pull that thing and cut and paste it into the newspaper, without putting it into the context of our own regional situation. Without editing it, without reanalyzing it." 253

Furthermore Ntengwe problematises the current use of the Internet by journalists, by stating that 90% of the articles in some of the newspapers we interviewed, have simply been "cut and pasted" into them and that this has killed the practical and inquisitorial aspect of

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<sup>253</sup>David Ntengwe/free-lance journalist and ICT-expert, timecode 390 side A

journalism.<sup>254</sup> Seen in this light it is highly questionable if the foreign news obtained from the Internet can contribute to amplify the Namibian population's understanding of the local surroundings.

On the other hand, as Raasheid from MISA points out, in the early 90ies Namibian journalists were not getting news about the country and the SADC region from independent media within the region itself. Journalists depended on governmental and international news-agencies to get news about neighbour countries. The international news-agencies did not to a satisfactory extend supply information about the region, and apart from that the information supplied from the foreign agencies was/is often of a rather sensational character <sup>255</sup> and dominated by Western discourse. With the Internet various news agencies in Southern Africa have emerged, and today a considerable amount of the regional news stems from regional news agencies, thus sources providing information on regional matters have expanded. Regional information might lead to increased regional awareness and enable useful comparisons with countries facing situations closer to that of a Namibian context than for example the setting of the countries in the North. Furthermore the news provided are seen "through the Southern eye" as Ntengwe puts it.<sup>256</sup>

### **Press Freedom and who's rights?**

Seen in relation to the media's role as watchdogs in a democratic Namibia, we elaborate on the issue of press freedom. Asking about press freedom Bryan from KCR stresses: " We are never scared, especially since we are a private radio station, we say whatever we see, even if the government does anything wrong, we say it immediately, that the government does this wrong, it is supposed to be this way, and nothing happens. So we are not afraid, we say what ever we say."<sup>257</sup> and more specific in relation to the Internet, Jörn from the Namibian points out: "I have faith in our government's commitment to freedom of speech. They have not done anything to date, to in anyway curtail our activity on the Internet, and I'm sure it will stay that way. I think it strengthens democracy."<sup>258</sup>

The opinion that Namibia is a country with a free press is supported by all of our interviewees, except for the MISA staff. Raasheid explains that several bills have been passed by the government, to limit the freedom of speech. One of the bills called the Diamond bill gives the government the possibility to demand exposure of confidential sources. The Film Commission bill is another example limiting filmmakers just as news journalists, in filming in Namibia. As Raasheid puts it: "But this authorisation process

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<sup>254</sup> David Ntengwe, timecode 404 side A

<sup>255</sup> I.e. news about war, catastrophes and crises

(Stig Hjarvad: Internationale TV-nyheder - En historisk analyse af det europæiske system for udveksling af TV-nyheder, Akademisk Forlag 1995 a)

<sup>256</sup> Ntengwe, timecode 075 side C

<sup>257</sup> Interview with Bryan/ Katatura Community Radiostation, timecode 208 to216 side A

<sup>258</sup> Interview with Jörn/The Namibian, timecode 266 side B

involves matters of content, in other words, they will decide on your content as well and this is despite the fact that Namibia's constitution has the right to freedom of expression. So they are in a position to actually limit freedom of expression." 259 This stresses the point that freedom of speech is not a static phenomenon, and that it can exist to various degrees. And also that freedom of expression of some conflicts with the freedom of expression of others.260

### **Alerts and human rights**

MISA plays a very important role in promoting press freedom in the SADC region. The alert system described in the previous section is only possible with use of the Internet as a tool. First of all the Internet makes the announcement of human right abuses on journalists very hard to censure and thereby avoid. Second the Internet facilitates an almost instant dissemination of this information to news agencies and human rights organisations within the region, as well as to other parts of the world. As the following sections will reveal the publication of human right abuses on journalists is important in relation to the individual journalist, to the public as well as to the government.

MISA stresses the importance of sensitising journalists to their rights and to possible violations of their rights. Besides exposing abuses on journalists as an insight in colleges work conditions in neighbouring countries, the alert system implicitly exposes journalists to their own rights. This is a very important aspect, as journalists aware of their own rights are more likely to be sensible to and focus on other people's rights. As Raashied from MISA presents it: "This journalist was called in by this minister, without reporting it as an alert ... so that means, when a minister calls in a journalist to scold him about a story, it's a media freedom violation ... so there is that educational bit about reporting it ... which goes also away to good governance, because eventually the people become ... sensitised to their rights." 261

Thus, the alert system plays a critical role in the journalists fulfilling their task as watchdogs. Furthermore the alert system encourages solidarity and unity among journalists in the region. This empowers them as individuals, but also offers protection. The protection consists in the awareness of the abuses being exposed, causing an outcry by other journalists, human right organisations etc. In other words the alert system scandalises the human right abuses. This limits governments abusing human rights on journalists, as " governments get afraid to do something wrong."262

All in all this can possibly encourage the development of critical journalism within the

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<sup>259</sup> Interview with Raasheid/ MISA, timecode 483 to 486 side A

<sup>260</sup> Ronning 1994

<sup>261</sup> Interview with Raasheid/MISA, timecode 528 side A

<sup>262</sup> Interview with Bryan, timecode 238 to 241

region and is thus an important aspect of educating journalists in the rules of democracy, and the role they obtain in a democratic society.

Furthermore the alert system provides media institutions with up to date news. The speed of the alert system is crucial to this. As the stories have news value they are likely to be used by the media, and thereby spread to the public. The publication of human right abuses committed in the region can promote a public awareness of the importance of a free press. Public support to the free press is crucial in the cementation of the ratified Windhoek declaration and also in the cementation of the constitutional rights within a democratic Namibia. Once you have created an awareness in the public about the significant role of independent media, it is difficult to erase that awareness and legitimise confined freedom. Furthermore by spreading human right abuses in the media you contribute to citizens becoming aware of their own rights. As such the media undertake an educational role in relation to the public.

The fact that human right abuses are registered and made publicly available puts pressure on the respective governments. The alert system informs human rights organisations within and outside the respective society, and can thus involve reactions coming from other governments and organisations such as Amnesty International. If there are continuous violations international donors might get involved and put pressure on governments from a higher level of diplomacy. In an overall perspective this puts pressure on governments in taking press freedom seriously.

### **Consequences of freedom of press**

Press freedom is crucial to the fulfilment of the watchdog role. As some kind of 4th estate, the media is the mediator between government and society and monitoring the government is to us a natural function of the media; but criticising a young democracy might also have unintentional consequences. At worst it could lead to destabilisation of the state.<sup>263</sup> First of all, heavy critique can turn the population against the government. In Namibia the highlight of corruption among SWAPO politicians has contributed to a disillusion of some citizens. Heavy critique can also focus mainly on peoples' rights as opposed to peoples' responsibilities, and in the light of being a development country it could be close to impossible to live up to equality ideals of democracy over a very short period. And last but not least, freedom of speech has led to examples of hate-speech, and as Helge from The Namibian points out Die Republikein is defending their right to publish "Whites only" advertisements using the argument, freedom of speech.<sup>264</sup> Elaborating on this, it is important to bear in mind that taking and giving critique constructively is something one has to learn and also that freedom of speech gives great responsibility to the media as well as to

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<sup>263</sup> Huntington 1968 (Political order in changing societies, Yale University press)

<sup>264</sup> Interview with Helge Schutz - not taped.

the population.

### **On-line debates and opinion polls**

Seen in the light of freedom of press "The whiteboards" on the Namibian's web-site<sup>265</sup> have various functions. With this on-line community the scopes of action has been extended for the journalist, the citizens and the government. Thus the whiteboards have created a new discussion forum.

For the population with Internet access it is now possible to proclaim their true opinions anonymously and also read what other citizens think about specific matters. This is important in a democratic society because it gives the citizens an opportunity to express themselves as political citizens and it also gives them an opportunity to be heard by others. Thus it has created a forum where opinions can be exchanged relatively freely, bearing in mind that the webmaster is in a gatekeeper position where he can sort out expressed opinions. As the webmaster Jörn explains he does not censor but he cuts out what he considers hate-speech such as very racist opinions.<sup>266</sup> Nevertheless the staff at The Namibian are aware that politicians use the site, and possibly do also contribute to the site. This on-line community has thus created a new link between the citizens and the government.

Apart from the discussion-forum there are also the electronic polls, which encourage the on-line readers to give their specific opinion about a variety of topics, many of them political. The polls function as indicators to the politicians about where the on-line people find situations and decisions satisfactory or not-satisfactory. Thus both the population and the politicians have been empowered by these polls. The population because they can express and publish their feelings almost instantly and they can expect to be heard. The politicians can stay in touch with the public opinion and thus the polls could influence on political decisions. We cannot say if there is any such influence and in which directions, but it is worth keeping in mind who have Internet access, and that it is mainly the elite. This could conduce to a twist in the politicians understanding of the general public opinion, as the elite does not necessarily carry a representative opinion in relation to the society as a whole. This possible twist in understanding of the public opinion also counts for the journalists, if they do not consider the limitation in access to participate in the on-line community. Nevertheless the white-boards and the opinion polls keep the Namibian in touch with the on-line readers, and it could possibly strengthen the relationship between the two.

Leading us to, whether these on-line communities are good or bad for equality in a democracy is a rather in-transparent matter. Because even though the citizens now theoretically have the possibility to express themselves, those who do not express their opinions (the majority) could be further marginalised in the important societal debates within

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<sup>265</sup> <http://www.namibian.com.na>

<sup>266</sup> Interview with Jörn/The Namibian, timecode 320 side B

the democracy.

### **Namibian news and information disseminated via the Internet**

This chapter concentrates on the importance of news-distribution via Web-sites, mailing lists and News-agencies and the pros and cons in relation to journalists, the Namibian government the citizens in Namibia and the international society.

The fact that various media workers in Namibia now have the possibility to disseminate information via the Internet to the International world is an issue that has been paid much attention, and also discussed in journalist environments. The whole issue of the communication in-balance between South and North is at stake. As David Nthengwe points out: "The government does not listen to us they listen to the North. The power is still up there, but what do they (people in the North) know about the South. We know about you but you don't know about us ... we have been left out ... we have not been proactive about ourselves towards the North."<sup>267</sup> With the Internet it is now hoped for that this could be somewhat changed. With newspapers', NGOs' and private initiatives this is starting to happen. MISAnet and the newspapers' web-sites are good examples but another initiative we became aware of is the African News Network (ANN) which is in an initial phase. This network has the North as target-group and the Internet as its basic tool for dissemination of news and information. The network co-operates with European NGOs i.e. the Danish Syd Afrika Kontakt that will further communicate the information.

Even considering all the constraints<sup>268</sup> and also reconsidering the extended amount of theoretical ideas about cultural-imperialism, initiatives like these nevertheless contribute to valuable knowledge being spread from the South to the North and thus supply the North with alternative and/or back-ground information otherwise not obtainable. With an important prerequisite, that the North makes use of the information and disseminate it there, and that the information is read<sup>269</sup>. For Namibia this could conduce to placing them on a world-map, thus sustaining and creating awareness about this "far away desert country somewhere in Africa". And in relation to Namibia's democratisation process this is important because it could possibly lead to that Namibia, with a new on-line worldwide profile, could attract more attention, more tourists and establish contacts and new relationships both regionally and internationally. Be they political, economical, cultural or social.<sup>270</sup> These could in one way or another benefit the whole population, for example leading to cultural exchanges, socially

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<sup>267</sup> Interview with David Nthengwe, timecode 000 side C

<sup>268</sup> Referring to the chapter Media and democracy

<sup>269</sup> Bearing in mind that individuals are "**situated interpreters**" and not all-knowing subjects, and that communicative practices such as the structures of the media set agendas, constrain possible meanings and possibly shape some of what individuals think about and discuss/Ronning 1994.

<sup>270</sup> UNDP 1999

empowered networks, solidarity between institutions, more direct foreign investments, new companies moving in etc. But seen in another light, depending on what information is disseminated to the North, who is reading it, and on how the Namibian government monitors national development and policies, it could also fall back at Namibia. With i.e. uncontrolled foreign investments leading to huge amounts of capital leaving the country, foreign companies out-conquering local companies thus creating increased unemployment, political pressure from the outside world and interference in national social and economic politics, which again possibly could lead to rejection of local culture and norms and thus create social instability in the country etc.

This whole complex of consequences of communication-processes via the Internet is thus related to the whole sensitive issue of freedom of expression seen in relation to nation-building and integrity of the nation-state. And it is internationally a widely discussed topic, to which extend international organisations and companies should be allowed to interfere in governments' national politics and development plans. This leads us to, in the light of the interrelatedness of things, that the whole issue of entering the information superhighway and thus opening up for a global audience could without national political interest and/or monitoring lead to a dirt track.

## **7. Conclusion**

Considering the complexity of our survey, the intention of making a sole conclusion could seem rather ambitious, but due to a remarkable similarity in our general and overall findings, we have chosen to do it this way.

Seen in the light of the Internet's appearance in Namibia during the past five to seven years, it does not seem to be the cure to all social ills. Namibia has one of the biggest gaps between rich and poor in the world and as could be expected only the most fortunate are the ones benefiting directly from the Internet. The rural population does not directly, if at all benefit from the Internet. On the contrary, the Internet elite now has a possibility to sustain their situation in an information rich urban society, Windhoek.

The overall impression of the use, thus referring to the majority of the Internet users in Namibia, is that the Internet is mainly used as a communication tool for e-mails and chat. The majority understood as the people using the Internet cafes, the students within the educational sector, the lecturers at the institutions and to a smaller degree the media workers. We find that it has been a rather difficult task to link the extended **private e-mail and chat** use to a democratisation process. But nevertheless, we believe this interactive kind of communication could possibly conduce to a feeling of **freedom**. Freedom to know other ways of life and freedom to take part in a virtual community where race, status, gender, age

and nationality tend to be less important as the physical appearance and other characteristics of the person do not influence the communicative interaction. This whole aspect of anonymity creates a possibility for the user to experiment with different kinds of **identities** and thus opens up for reflections about life in general. The meetings taking place on the Internet could in this manner sustain self-understanding in reflecting upon the otherness, thus possibly empowering the individual in the realisation of ones own cultural heritage leading to a feeling of belonging in the society. On the other hand the virtual meetings could also lead to a rejection of this, and thereby further **polarise** the society, as the otherness could represent new attractive trends, establish new needs and simply create new ways of approaching things.

That the Internet by the majority is used for email and chat indicates that the greatest demand the Internet can fulfil in Namibia at the moment is that of the need for a new space for communication. Some i.e. UNDP, the Namibian government, lecturers and editors would state that what lacks for more people to use the Internet for development purposes, is training and adaptability. Thus this leaves us with the question if this personal email and chat contributing to personal empowerment leads to overall development? And if the answer is no, this leads us to the next question, if the Namibians should be taught to use the Internet "the proper" way or if they already use it the **proper** way?

Within the Internet elite in Namibia it is only a small fraction dominantly consisting of foreigners, well trained in Internet use, who utilises a wider scope of the possibilities available on the Internet privately as well as professionally. Of the two, the **professional use** of email in Namibia is more directly linked to our understanding of democracy, i.e. to empower people to participate in their society. This use covers a wide field, from simple message delivering and receiving to **co-ordination and networking** between the institutions. A good example of this is the lecturer Chisenga from UNAM who is networking and co-operating with other universities. The inspiration and know-how he obtains conduces to empowering not only him but also the institution in which he works as he to various degrees makes use of this in his professional work. Another good example is MISA alerts where journalists and other media workers co-operate and establish contact with like-minded. Which again sustains national and regional **solidarity** between them. The specific purpose of these networks are among others sensitising the journalists to their rights thus building them as professional media-workers and encouraging them to sensitise other people to their rights. By doing this they could strengthen the media institutions' roles as **watch-dogs** and the possible recognition achieved from the public could further enhance the role of the free press in Namibia.

Furthermore the Internet is used to collect and disseminate scientific material as well as news, and thereby the Internet expands the scope of action for the institutions connected. Nevertheless the scope of action mainly refers to an international context, and not very much

to a national on-line communication community, due to the current stage of infancy of the Internet in Namibia.

In the light of the above the Internet use **empowers all** of the media institutions though within the institutions some individuals more than others. But, in the educational sector the picture is rather different. As mentioned above it empowers certain individuals and to some extent also the institution, but with the introduction of the Internet, a majority of the people within the institution has been further **marginalised**. At UNAM the appearance of this new technology has created new qualification demands dividing the students and staff into A and B teams due to lack of computer literacy, lack of accessibility and lack of training for the majority. Thus the overall picture at the University is that the majority has been **disempowered** in comparison to the Internet elite at the University. The issue of A and B teams does not only count between and among user groups in the educational institutions but A and B teams are also arising among connected and not-connected educational institutions in Namibia in general.

The professional elite who has brought along a request for the Internet, and generally pushed for expansion of use within the institutions, uses the Internet in a strategic and professional manner, and as mentioned this to various degrees empowers them in their respective institutions. But for this to have any further influence on our understanding of **democracy** as empowerment of the people, it is very important how and if they disseminate down loaded information from the Internet to the wider public. I.e. lecturers or librarians supplying students with valuable information according to their subjects, the newspapers supplying their readers with news from pluralistic sources writing about and within the SADC region. Or, Katutura Community Radio giving the less fortunate and illiterate an opportunity to reflect on severe Namibian problems such as AIDS, health and environmental issues. Bearing in mind that this is not an explicitly expressed need from the community, the readers and the students, the Internet has made it easier for KCR, the newspapers and the lecturers to give their target group the possibility to access this information. Leading us to that information downloaded from the Internet can possibly conduce to **empower some** people in Namibia's democratisation process if they understand and make use of the information. Stressing, it is very important how and if this elite chooses to use their downloaded information and gained knowledge to serve the country and how this information is understood and used by the receivers.

But who are those "some people" possibly benefiting from the disseminated information. Within the educational sector, very few schools are connected and the ones that are only make use of the Internet to a limited degree. Referring to the media, both the formal and alternative, have a very low penetration rate in the Namibian society. Thus the dissemination of information at the moment is a very little step on a very long track. And apart from that,

this little step is only taken by a very small group of idealistic individuals. In addition this little step by the few is problematic at a national level, since the already fortunate few who benefit from the Internet thereby become richer and all the others thus relatively poorer. In this sense the gap between the **have and the have-nots** is growing within the Namibian society. All leading us to that there are no easy solutions to democratisation and that the Internet at the moment plays a contradictory role in Namibia's democratisation process. We find that for the **full value** of the Internet's empowerment role, an interrelated system of connected flexible organisations and information oriented institutions are required. As cultural and educational empowerment conditions democratic development - which again conditions social empowerment (which conditions economic development) and this stimulates cultural and educational development once more.

## **8. Perspectives**

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## ENCLOSURE A - Interviews

### *Experts:*

David Ntengwe: Journalist from Malawi, specialised in human rights and ICT in the SADC region. Responsible for Namibia News On-line together with South Africa Contact, Denmark. Previously worked as researcher and journalist for MISA, currently working on establishing an African News Agency (AAN)

Alfred von Kent: Ministry of Higher Education

Cathrine Embubulu: Ministry of Basic Education and Culture

Ferdinand Tjombe: Telecom Namibia

Louie: Microsoft expert, employed by CompuTeach, a company offering computer courses  
Chad, Mr. Roos, Tony: Owners of I-Cafes in Windhoek

Frank: ISP and I-Cafe, Oshakati

### *Media-institutions:*

**MISA** is an NGO located in Windhoek.

Interviewed person: Raasheid Galant, a 30 years old coloured South African who works as a researcher/journalist and is the IT-responsible at MISA.

**KCR** is a community radio station on the outskirts of Windhoek

Interviewed person: Brian, a 30 years old black Nigerian who works as News-editor. Has a Nigerian certificate in teaching. Has participated in a media-training program in how to gather news and edit information.

**The Namibian** is a national daily newspaper situated in Windhoek.

Interviewees:

Helge Schutz, a 35 years old white journalist originally from Austria. Studied Law and International Development in South Africa. Writes for the Sports-section.

Jörn Scaby, a 30 years old white Namibian. He is web-master and IT-responsible. Studied Architecture and Political Science in South Africa.

**Die Republikein** is a national daily newspaper situated in Windhoek.

Interviewed person: Herma, a white Namibian journalist around 50 years of age. She is responsible for the Business-section and also the webmaster at Die Republikein.

**Algemeine Zeitung** is a national daily newspaper situated in Windhoek.

Interviewed person:

Edgar Halbich who is an approximately 40 years old white Namibian journalist. He is the

sub editor and responsible for reporting on political and legislative issues.

### ***Educational - institutions***

#### **Key-persons in the educational sector:**

##### **University of Namibia (UNAM):**

###### **Staff:**

Clint Nicholsson, a middle-aged coloured male, from Namibia  
Head of the Computer Centre at UNAM

Justin Chisenga, middle-aged black male, from Zambia  
Lecturer in the Department of Information and Communication studies.

Fred Onyango, middle-aged male, from Kenya  
Subject librarian (education) at UNAM

###### **Students:**

Victoria, female in the twenties, from Namibia, Communication and Information Studies  
Jerret, female in the twenties, from Zambia, Communication and Information Studies

Also interviewed:

- Two non-users
- Four users in a group-interview in the library
- Four users in a group-interview at campus

##### **Pan Hofi Secondary School:**

Mr. Andima, Namibian black male in the thirties  
Principal of the school

##### **School-Net and Insect-thon:**

Joris Komen, middle-aged white male, biologist from United States  
Initiator and in charge of the projects

##### **American Cultural Centre:**

Venna, middle-aged female from Namibia  
Head librarian

##### **UNESCO:**

###### **Staff:**

Yuki, young male from Japan  
Associated expert in communication

Martha, young female from Namibia  
Secretary at the front desk

**Users:**

- Four users in a group-interview
- Three users interviewed on an individual basis.

**The University of Namibia** - the only university in the country. As the university is seen as a key actor in the further development of Namibia and due to its high rate of Internet connectivity it is treated extensively in our analysis.

The Pan Hofi project at a secondary school in the North of Namibia and the 'Insect-thon/School-Net' initiatives at the National Museum in Windhoek are included as innovative ways to implement IT in Namibian schools. These cases will be treated in a perspective manner due to the elementary stage of Internet in schools in Namibia, thereby their exceptionality in the field.

The field of public access is included in this sector as it has an educational intention by offering free Internet access and in that way is a crucial actor in the informal education sector. To our knowledge Internet access is only being offered for that purpose at four places in Windhoek: UNESCO, The American Culture Centre, The British Counsel and MISA.

## ENCLOSURE B - Questionnaire

### 1. THE PERSON

- Name age nationality (how long time here), ethnicity, education, occupation, how long time in the institution, relation to IT (position in institution)

### 2. THE INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION

- Describe your institution/organisation:
- How many employees do you have, what is your history, mission and objectives?

### 3. IT & YOUR INSTITUTION

- How many computers? How many with Internet?
- Who has access?
- Which ISP?
- Intranet? (How does it work – by who?) Other network?
  
- The history of Internet, when was it implemented?
- Who promoted it? (Personal interest or command from above?)
- Who was in favour of the implementation of IT? Who was not?
- Different interests behind the implementation of IT?
- How was/is it financed? (Donor \$?)
- What were the different goals with IT?
- How does that fit with your main objectives?
- What were the expectations to the implementation of IT? Have they been fulfilled?
  
- Training: Are courses offered? What kind of courses? For whom?
- What was the potential users' reaction to the Internet?

### 4. THE USE OF INTERNET

- Who is using the Internet?
- Any limitations to the use (time, money)?
- Any limitations concerning specific sites? (*entertainment/censorship?*)
- So, is it being used?

#### **WWW and own websites**

*Information coming in from the net:*

- Do you surf the net?
- How much time spent on surfing, institution (estimated) and personally?
- What information do you need from the Internet?
- Why? According to your main goals and objectives?
- From which sources do you get the needed information (bookmarks, favourite sites etc.)?
- Was that information accessible before IT?
- What do you use that information for? And how?

*Information going on the net:*

- Do your organisation/institution have a website?
- Who designed it? (*Who decided what had to be on?*)

- Who maintains it?
- How often is it updated?
- What are the aims of your website?
- Who is the planned targetgroup?
- Who are the actual users?
- What do you use the website for? (What information do you offer, and how is this decided?)
- Do you have any idea of how the website is being received?
- Do you use statistics? (*Hit technology?*)

#### **Chat, newsgroups and information/data bases**

- Is the net being used for chat?
- Do you know what kind of chat, and how often?
- Do you use newsgroups? Which ones, and how often?
- Are you contributing yourself? Why not?
- Do you search information from information bases? (which, how often, for what purpose)
- Are you maintaining any information bases?

#### **E-mail and mailing lists**

- Do you use email, how much? What do you use e-mail for?
- What kind of information do you send out? (*letters, pictures - whatever*)
- What do you receive?
- Are you on any mailing-lists?
- Do you contribute to any mailing lists? With what information?
- Do you use information received through any of these channels in other mediums/ information distributions, explain. (spørgsmålet skal relateres til den konkrete institution)

#### **Strategy**

- Any strategy plan? (Could we have one?)
- Any visions for the future? Are the visions realistic?
- What do you need to fulfill these visions?
- New possibilities with the implementation of Internet? For who?

### **5. THE IT FIELD**

- How would you describe the Internet situation in Namibia?
- Who take part in the IT field?
- Where else do people make use of IT in Namibia?
- Do you have any co-operation with other parts of the IT field?
- Do you use MISANet, the Namibians website, UNAM's website/knowledge, governmental sites, IT-café's, etc.

### **6. DEMOCRACY**

- The ongoing discussion these days is the assumed link between IT and democracy.
- Could you comment on that in relation to Namibias situation? (can IT promote/limit the democratisation process, how)
- How do you interpret your organisations role in a democratic society, (and does this relate to the use of IT, how)?
- Do you think IT has a role in the development of Namibia?
- What is IT good for/bad for?
- Where/How - in which contexts is IT insufficient?

## **ENCLOSURE C - Answers from UNAM survey**

Survey conducted by Justin Chisenga, full questionnaire can be found at [www.unam.na/1370/jcstudy.htm](http://www.unam.na/1370/jcstudy.htm) We counted the answers from selected answers in 100 surveys returned to Justin Chisenga, he had not yet worked through the questionnaires himself so no statistics was made.

### **Who are you?**

#### **1. Registered in which faculty?**

- Agriculture & Natural Resources: 4
- Education: 10
- Humanities & Social Sciences: 18
- Law: 3
- Economics & Management Sciences: 27
- Medical & health Sciences: 0
- Science: 31
- Centre for External Studies: 1

#### **6. Gender**

- Female: 45
- Male: 57

#### **7. Are you:**

- Namibian student: 59
- Foreign student - from SADC: 33
- Foreign Student – outside SADC: 5

### **Access to the Internet**

#### **9. Where do you MAINLY have access to the Internet:**

- UNAM Library: 79
- Home: 9
- Internet Cafe: 5
- Lecturer's Office: 1
- Faculty/Department's Computer Lab: 10
- Others (please specify): 4

#### **10. Where ELSE do you have access to the Internet?**

- UNAM Library: 18
- Home: 12
- Internet Cafe: 18
- Lecturer's Office: 3
- Faculty/Department's Computer Lab: 20

-Else not: 44

-Others (please specify): 6 (3 Unesco)

Waste: 2

#### **12. On the average, how many hours per week do you spend on the Internet access computer?**

Less than 1 hour: 9

1 hour: 23

1-3 hours/week: 45

4-6 hours/week: 16

7-9 hours/week: 6

10-12 hours/week: 4

Over 12 hours/week: 1

#### **13. Which of the following Internet facilities do you use on a regular basis?**

-Electronic mail: 78

-Web browsing: 63

-Discussion groups: 3

-Newsgroups: 25

-Telnet: 3

-Chat facilities: 22

-File transfer: 8

-Others (please specify): 4

#### **17. How did you learn how to use the Internet facilities?**

-Library orientation: 5

-Reading books: 3

-Self-taught: 51

-From friends: 43

- University course: 3

- Attended private Internet use course: 0

- Others: 1

- Spild: 3

### **Using the Internet**

#### **18. FIRST major use for E-mail facilities?**

- Communicate with lecturers at UNAM: 2
- Communicate with friends in Namibia: 9
- Communicate with friends outside Namibia: 48
- Communicate with relatives in Namibia: 1
- Communicate with relatives outside Namibia: 19
- Communicate with students outside Namibia: 9
- Communicate with students in Namibia: 0
- Participation in discussion groups: 4
- Others (please specify): 6
- Do not use E-mail facilities: 8
- Waste: 2

**20. FIRST major use of the World Wide Web?**

- Entertainment and sports: 36
- Accessing materials recommended by lecturers: 30
- Accessing electronic newspaper in Namibia: 1
- Accessing electronic newspapers outside Namibia: 12

- Visiting other University sites: 4
- Accessing E-mail web server: 9
- Just browsing with no particular subject in mind: 3
- Others (please specify): 5
- Do not use web facilities: 2
- Waste: 2

**21. What information have you ever downloaded or retrieved from the Internet?**

- Entertainment and sports: 19
- Accessing materials recommended by lecturers: 15
- Accessing electronic newspaper in Namibia: 6
- Accessing electronic newspapers outside Namibia: 14
- Visiting other University sites: 20
- Accessing E-mail web server: 11
- Just browsing with no particular site or subject in mind: 14
- Others (please specify): 2
- Do not use web facilities: 2
- Waste: 3

**ENCLOSURE D - Abstract of project in Danish**