

## O USO DE FILTROS DE CONTROLE NA INTERNET: O CASO DO SISTEMA EDUCACIONAL

### *FILTROS DE CONTROL DE USO DE INTERNET: EL CASO DEL SISTEMA EDUCATIVO*

### *THE USE OF CONTROL FILTERS ON THE INTERNET: THE CASE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM*

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**RESUMO:** O avanço da internet nos meios sociais e educacionais tem gerado uma gama de estudos e pesquisa sobre as possibilidades e os desafios que o uso das mídias e tecnologias podem promover. No meio educacional um embate é realizado no sentido de liberar ou não a navegação em sites de relacionamento, blogs, microblogs ou em chat. Na maioria das escolas e até mesmo nas universidades o comum é o uso de “filtros” que impedem a navegação, restringindo o uso dos navegantes. Este artigo, apresenta um estudo de caso, enquanto pesquisa qualitativa online, trazendo uma análise de dados coletados na Universidade Federal de Alagoas junto a alunos de vários cursos e também alguns professores, inclusive da área das Tecnologias da Informação e Comunicação. Na visão da maioria dos alunos os sites de relacionamento, a exemplo das redes sociais, podem ser utilizados, ou já foram utilizados, para alguma atividade de estudo. Para a maioria dos professores ainda é cedo para que tudo seja liberado, mas que uma nova educação deve incluir o bom uso das TIC e o uso de filtros ainda é um recurso que precisa ser utilizado enquanto a sociedade se adapta a cultura do online.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Filtros de controle. Educação. Internet.

**RESUMEN:** *El avance de Internet en los centros educativos y sociales ha generado una serie de estudios e investigaciones sobre las posibilidades y desafíos que el uso de medios de comunicación y tecnologías puede promover. En el ámbito educativo se lleva a cabo un enfrentamiento con el fin de liberar o no a la navegación en los sitios de redes sociales, blogs, microblogs o chat. En la mayoría de las escuelas y universidades, incluso en común es el uso de "filtros" que impiden la navegación, lo que restringe el uso de navegadores. En este*

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*artículo se presenta un estudio de caso, mientras que la investigación cualitativa en línea, con lo que un análisis de los datos recogidos en la Universidad Federal de Alagoas con estudiantes de distintos cursos y también algunos profesores, incluyendo el área de las Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación. En opinión de la mayoría de los estudiantes sitios de redes sociales, como las redes sociales, que pueden ser utilizados o se han utilizado para alguna actividad de estudio. Para la mayoría de los maestros de todo aún es pronto para ser puesto en libertad, pero una nueva educación debe incluir el uso adecuado de las TIC y el uso de filtros también es un recurso que debe ser utilizado como la sociedad se adapta a la cultura en línea.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Filtros de control. La educación. Internet.*

**ABSTRACT:** *The advancement of the internet in social and educational media has generated a range of studies and research on the possibilities and challenges that the use of media and technologies can promote. In the educational environment a clash is carried out in the sense of releasing or not browsing in relationship sites, blogs, microblogs or in chat. In most schools and even in universities, it is common to use "filters" that prevent navigation, restricting the use of navigators. This article presents a case study, as a qualitative online research, bringing an analysis of data collected at the Federal University of Alagoas together with students of several courses and also some teachers, including in the area of Information and Communication Technologies. In the view of most students, social networking sites, such as social networks, can be used or have been used for some study activity. It is still too early for all teachers to be released, but a new education should include good use of ICT and the use of filters is still a resource that needs to be used as society adapts to online culture.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Control filters. Education. Internet.*

## **Introduction: the contemporary panorama**

The contemporary panorama has a constant flux in front of the new informational ambience galvanized by the possibilities in the use of the technologies, suggesting a new dynamic in the social structures.

Although it still builds a large part of its relational structures in the physical element, in which the physical presence is still the main element in social relations, on the recent decades a new social structure begun to mature and to ground their relationships in a new environment using information as a medium in cyberspace (LÉVY, 1999).

"Due to the great penetrability in all spheres of human activity" (CASTELLS, 1999, p. 42), Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are becoming one of the main elements of a new social construct. Due to this new demand, several social structures create virtual extensions of their institutions in cyberspace, in pursuit to offer more efficient services and access to information and communication at relatively affordable prices. It then

establishes new patterns of production and consumption, inducing thousands of people to make plain use of the many possibilities that this new space of transactions could offer.

In the educational context the new technologies were received with great enthusiasm by some but were viewed with mistrust by others. Among some enthusiasts and other skeptics, education followed a new wave guided mainly by the insertion of informatics in the school environment, waiting for an apex never seen by any other age and society.

However, from several experiences that have contributed to the maturation of the use of technologies in educational spaces, it is nowadays perceived that, besides being received with enthusiasm and novelty, these new applications also demand and charge a very high price (BLIKSTEIN; ZUFFO, 2003). Rather than making technological devices available in training spaces, this new environment requires a complex spiral that permeates the use of pedagogical intentionality, and the training of teachers and other members of pedagogical teams is the focus of innumerable investees of governments, as well as of private institutions.

This article, based on the theoretical assumptions underlying the use of ICT in education, is the result of a qualitative research and analyzes, from a descriptive case study, the use of mechanisms to control access to contents on the Internet, their contributions and possible consequences for the learning process. The data were collected in virtual environments, created by the researchers and visited by students and professors of the Federal University of Alagoas. And what motivated the development of the research focused exactly on the difficulties that most students face when trying to use some sites, including social networking sites, as a possible learning tool.

### **The contemporaneity as liquid modernity**

The idea of a transition process from Modernity to Postmodernity, as a set of values, procedures and concepts, constitutes an always discursive philosophical confrontation. Modernity refers to style, custom of life or social organization that emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century and which has influenced a large part of the inhabited globe delimiting a period and an initial geographical location, with its main characteristics not clearly delimited, "safely stored in a black box" (GIDDENS, 1991, p. 11).

Postmodern thought, proposed as a transitional model, is based on the assertion that modernity, as a great structuring narrative of Western thought, predictably defining the present, past and future, has been extinguished, giving rise to a new corporate order, ruled by the dismantling of the existing order (NONATO, 2006, 78). In this way, understanding that

the modern model has disconnected from previous models, but that it also has consolidated as a dynamic and structured model with constant mutations, but did not lose the property of constant flow.

Bauman (2001), in turn, proposes a re-signification of the postmodern age as liquid modernity. According to the author, "fluidity" is identified as the mark of this modernity, because Fluids or Liquids are always ready for change and fill spaces only for a moment, not holding on to time and space. The fact that social structures, their elements and contents dissolve faster than the time it takes to be built (BAUMAN, 2007), as well as the concrete and factual changes in the dynamics that govern the life of the several people around the planet, in their interrelations, constructions and reconstructions of a new societal order are thus correlative to a Liquid Modernity.

Understanding these cultural spaces, as well as the derivations resulting from such presuppositions, is fundamental to allow us to think about the educational model and its interconnections with emerging technologies inserted in the teaching-learning space.

### **The use of information technology and its interfaces in education**

The use of computing devices in education is no longer recent in the Brazilian scenario, dating back to the early 1980s (ALMEIDA, 2009). Its feasibility is part of the possibilities as a potential mediator for the practice of teaching and learning.

In this perspective, the Internet-connected computer has established itself not only as a source of information and a communication channel, but also as a potential tool for creating and developing ideas, knowledge, values and disseminating them as a mechanism to help the human development.

Contemporary Brazilian researchers such as Mercado (2009), Moran (2000) Almeida (2009) and Silva (2003) point to the integration of digital media into learning spaces, indicating pedagogical possibilities with the use of their interfaces. In this way, ICT in education can be thought of as a resource that enhances the dimensions of the teaching-learning process, given that we are inserted in the context of cyberculture (LÉVY, 1999) and that our students of the 21st century were born halfway through this avalanche of technologies (PRENSKY, 2001).

## The use of internet control filters

The use of control filters for Internet access has become a nuisance, in the eyes of students, and a solution for IT departments. With the installation of these devices it is possible to manage and/or monitor the use of the internet in your network, blocking access to sites and applications considered useless, unproductive and even potentially dangerous. This happens when these filters are installed on the primary server that powers the network.

These locks are programmed from IP filters (*Internet Protocol* - an address that indicates the location of any given computer on a network), URL's (*Uniform Resource Locator*), by keywords and blocking domains.

There is a main server and a central computer, where all Internet and Intranet networks are managed. From this server, locks are commanded by programming filter software to block websites on the network that use certain words in your domain.

The discourse that often accompanies this attitude states that this is a necessary measure for the protection of the network, computers and their users, protecting them from the "evils" of the Internet.

Many companies adopt Internet blocking policies that can incorporate IP filters, URL blocking by keywords, and blocking domains. Chat sites, instant communicators, social networks, blogs, keywords that suggest sexual content, humor (jokes), arts (music) are blocked in several companies on the grounds that they do not match a productive work environment. The effectiveness of content blocking in some companies is much stricter than any Internet censorship policy in many countries.

There are several locking techniques and these can be performed through specific software installed on the equipment that accesses the Internet, through the local server router. The main techniques used are described in **table 1**.

**Table 01** - Types and Characteristics of Control Filters

Types	Characteristics
Filter IP	The IP filters allow the blocking of IP addresses, gateways and protocols. Commonly there is only one IP number and this technique allows the blocking of specific web sites as well as the access to any applicative that use specific gateways of the TCP/IP protocol.
URL Block	"URL filters allow to block access to sites and content through a list of keywords that may contain terms like" xxx "and" sex "(suggesting sexual content)," .mp3 "and" .wav "suggesting material that infringes copyrights) and" cialis "(suggesting access to SPAMs on the internet). However, they may bring in some unscheduled additional remarks: official sites of cities such as Essex, Sussex and Middlesex, research on" socialism "can be blocked because it contains one of the fragments of the blocked keywords and it is necessary to create a list of exceptions.
MAC Filters	The MAC filters allow to block the access of specific computers to the Internet; in this sense they are not usually used to filter or censor content, but to deny access to the Internet for specific computers.
Domain Block	The domain block allows to block access to specific web sites on the internet through a list of web sites to which access is denied. It is efficient for blocking the access to any and all content of a website in a similar way to the results obtained by the IP filter. In 2007, in Brazil, the domain youtube.com was blocked through a provisional court order

Source: Developed by the authors

In direct contrast to the blocking processes, it is noted that the researches in the area of technologies applied to education advance in affirming their potential of use and present new methodologies, linked to the connectivism - theory of distributed knowledge.

Authors such as Prado (2001), Mercado (2005) and Cruz (2006) defend the use of the Chat tool as a possibility for teaching and learning, since the chat allows the communication of people who are separated in space and time so that they can maintain a synchronous dialogue. The dynamics of the tool involves sending and receiving messages in a synchronous way, where it can be discussed and commented on long conversations.

In education we can use it as part of the teaching and learning process, to capture knowledge and deepen content that has been worked in the classroom, as defined by Mercado (2008); Bittencourt and Mercado (2014).

Another item in the list of blocking filters is the social media websites. According to Recuero (2005), social network is a set of two elements: **actors** (people, institutions or groups) and their **connections**.

Some educators still see it as a repository of information and not as social educational possibilities to be worked on in order to awaken the critical and reflexive side of the student.

However, we can recall Siemens (2004), in the postulates of connectivism when he defined that our competences are derived from formation of connections that we make.

These are just two examples of interfaces or applications normally blocked in institutions, including the academy, but which are pointed out as a possibility to help teachers and students in the development of teaching and learning.

### What teachers and students are saying

Being one of the elements of this research, in the year 2004 an autonomous and open community was created with the nickname UFAL to deal with subjects of interest of those who use the services and benefits that the university offers. And since social networks allow the creation of polls and discussion forums, a forum was created to discuss the use of locking mechanisms in the Internet browsers of UFAL.

The forum was opened with the following proposal: *"What do you think of the use by the university of mechanisms such as content filters to prevent access to social networking sites, videos sites, etc.?"*

Regarding the students' views, as the main focus of this research, it was concluded that some feel constrained to undertake their projects in public Internet access spaces. Others challenge the system and constantly seek mechanisms to circumvent this control. Still others argue that this is a way of curtailing and maintaining social control by depriving students of some of the content that could be undertaken in students by revolutionary projects moving against social order.

In the register of **Respondent 01**, it is observed that his knowledge per passes by questions of the legislation, also presenting its considerations and leaving to the user's personal conscience as to the misuse or not of such sites

***RESP01:** Of course, the instantaneous dissemination of information among millions of people does not just bring benefits. Like any new technology, the Internet has also created unprecedented opportunities for the practice of illicit acts. Properly used, however, it is an extremely useful tool for denouncing abuses, expressing opinions and making concrete changes in society. Therefore, there is a growing interest in controlling the Internet, as expressed by several Countries. The arguments are seductive - "protecting national security," "preserving cultural and religious values," "protecting intellectual property rights," "protecting children from pornography," and the like-and have served to justify the implementation of controlled censorship systems In addition, the difficulties inherent to the protection of rights in the Internet area also increase the interest in the use of technological mechanisms that can give greater effectiveness to the judicial*



*decisions, especially in the hypotheses of removal or blocking access to harmful content made available on the network.*

*In fact, it would not be up to a model of democratic and entrepreneurial education to block access to content that does not violate the current law. On the wheels of discussions between students, the discourse predominates in the part that says that there should be no blocking of content, but these attitudes serve only to disrupt the lives of those who want to study and research. Especially when research sources come from websites that are blocked by the university. In this case, we can only resort to our personal computers, when this possibility exists, Lan Houses, or another network that is not managed by the institution. However, one should not turn a blind eye to the fact that most people using the interfaces that are blocked use them in the educational environment for other purposes.*

*And when I made use of these tools to work it was at home, so why do not these people do it too? The use of social networks, msn and the like should relate to the conscience of each one because to use a computer of the laboratory for non-academic purposes is to prevent someone to study, but I do not have a formed opinion on the subject, because this thing of prohibiting too much it is also radical. What I can say is that I understand if the university does, to avoid that each one occupies the few computers of the university to chat.*

Regarding the rights mentioned by **Respondent 01**, the right to the principle of freedom of expression of thought is one of the freedoms disposed to the Individual Positive Rights. In the Brazilian case it is foreseen in the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988, article 5, subsections IV and X reads that "the manifestation of thought is free, and anonymity is forbidden; It is free expression of intellectual, artistic, scientific and communication activity, regardless of censorship or license."

Article 220, in turn, reinforces the former by emphasizing that "the manifestation of thought, creation, expression and information in any form, process or vehicle shall not be subject to any restriction, subject to the provisions of this Constitution."

However, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in its article 19, way back in the 1950's, already established that "every individual has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which implies the right not to be disturbed by their opinions and to seek , to receive and disseminate, without regard to frontiers, information and ideas by any means of expression."

**Respondent 02** and **Respondent 06** are opposed to release, since it is based on the fact that people are not aware of it, agreeing with 11% of the respondents (Table 02. Positioning: *I prefer like this. There are people who occupy the net with utilities.*).

**RESP02:** *If you release is a party, if it is prohibited is a protest. It is 8 or 80. In this case the solution is neither one nor the other. But since this solution is not possible ... = / It goes from the consciousness of anyone, right? And as everything works around a "majority", access to some content is blocked*



*because, if released, this majority uses in a banal way. Then the minority who uses something useful ends up paying for the loss too = P. Conclusion ... it never changes. Forget the story of "releasing and raising awareness" because it does not work. I do not agree with the ban (so I voted in OTHER OPINIONS), but it seems to be the right way SOMETIMES.*

**RESP06:** *It should be blocked, yes.... The entrance in social sites and networks inside the campus occupies a space that could be better utilized. Moreover, most of the time, people use these Sites to talk "POTOCAS". It is a very good idea to block.*

As for **Respondent 03** and **Respondent 07**, they presented opinions favorable to the release regarding the use of notebooks or personal notebook, or with the intent that the consciousness will rule the use of the Internet

**RESP03:** *If the user is on your laptop using the Wi-Fi network, I do not see the need to block, now if it is in a laboratory, the yes, I agree with that!!*

**RESP05:** *I have been sent works, summaries and websites for studies through social networks. And it was not possible to receive it because it is blocked. so not everything is Potoca. There are people who study, by this type of sites or by msn. is at the discretion of each one.*

**RESP07:** *You must release the relationship sites yes, youtube too, downloads also, each user has to be aware about the network access inside the campus.*

**Table 02** shows that there is still a great deal of divergence of opinion and the fact that only 11% have already used videos and social networking sites for academic activities, as well as the manifestation of **Respondent 05**. Or to little is known about the educational possibilities, or teachers have used these resources.

**Table 02 - Opinions regarding the use of social networking websites**

OPINION	Total of votes:
I think it is necessary because there is nothing socio-educative about them	11%
I disagree. I up to the consciousness of each person.	14%
The university should not limit the access, but provide guidance instead.	12%
It is not up for the university to decide, it is an attribution of the user.	8%
I prefer that. the net with futilities	11%
I have used videos and social networking sites for studying reasons.	11%

X rated web sites must be forbidden.	12%
Social media, Youtube, etc., are useful tools.	14%
Other opinions	3%

Source: Research database (2009)

The data presented in **table 02**, as well as the excerpts from some respondents, show that this topic is still controversial and diverse, with a wide range of opinions, implying further deepening of the issues relevant to the use of the Internet and other ICTs in education.

### Final considerations

Paradigmatic education has traditionally been centered on one-way transmission, passive information reproduction, and standardized curriculum. However, faced with new information and communication techniques and inside the context of an increasingly connected, demanding, critical and reflexive society, an increasingly systematized educational system is valued in the interaction and exchange of information between teacher and student, stimulating the creativity of the students.

However, a problem of the education in the XXI century is that many supports it in the pillars of ICT, hoping that they present the immediate resolution of all the problems of Brazilian education which, by the way, are historical and involve such complex factors in the Brazilian sociocultural formation.

The present educational institutions, regardless of the degree of education or of being public or private, are well served with a good arsenal of technological devices. The conception about the school of the future is one that offers access to technology, the one that offers computer science, classes transmitted by satellite, one computer per student, exhibition of classes in slides with multimedia projectors.

However, in the computer labs of these institutions there are rules of use of the network, with more prohibitions than possibilities. The following deprivations are common: access and use of certain e-mails, instant messaging sites, social networking sites, download sites, game sites, video storage sites, music storage sites and their streaming media (...), in short, the use of computers is strictly regulated on the walls of the laboratories and often right in the main entrance door, with the warnings of punishments for those who are willing to disregard such rules.

It is considered that an education, using such means, can provide - both for teachers and for students - the pedagogical elements necessary for their use in favor of teaching and learning.

This research still does not present a full or complete ideal. It is necessary to go ahead, including research what is being currently investigating in the Graduate Programs or in programs such as PIBIC, bringing other elements that are favorable to the complementation of these data.

Another element that is presented as primordial is to bring awareness to the postulations of connectivism as a "new" pedagogical theory in this computerized era, observing if its bases collaborate for the understanding of a networking culture and learning through connections.

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