

People, platform practices, performatives

The centrality of science in shaping social progress has been deliberated as early as the 18th century, especially during the rise of technological inventions that led to the Industrial Revolution (Smith, 1994). On the one hand, technological determinists forward the idea that technology affects human behavior and society (Bogost & Montfort, 2009). On the other hand, social constructivists insist that technologies exist because of human response to sociocultural progress (Barnes et al., 1996). The determinist view has long abandoned its solid and hard tenet of technological impact on culture, especially after World War II, with an acknowledgment that technology and human beings co-shape society. In effect, the study of technology and human engagements also grew from heavy technology-centric research inventions, computer systems, and video games to an interrogation of technological progress and its relationships with people, places, and cultural particularities.

This *Plaridel* issue looks into the performative role of human engagements inside online platforms. First, I described *people* as individuals who participate in social media worldwide. Kepios (2022) and Datareportal (2022) have reported a steady increase in social media users globally. Kepios found out that there is an annual growth rate of 4.2% or at least six new social media users every second, while Datareportal claimed that fewer than 3 billion people have low to no access to the internet. Seemingly, universal access to internet technologies has risen, and such results may

impact individual, community, and social practices worldwide. In this issue, I defined *platforms* as digital spaces where exchanges of information, goods, and services result in digital dialogue, participation, empowerment, and civic involvement of various forms and sizes (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016; Tenney & Sieber, 2016). The issue includes works that interrogate social media, sharing, and knowledge platforms. Further, I borrowed the speech act concept of the *performative*. The term notes that empowered and felicitous collaborations between platforms and people can create convergences, which result in gratified actions and interactions.

The discursive possibilities that come with the engagement between people and platforms that result in performative practices are discussed in this *Plaridel* issue. I arranged the articles in terms of the nature of the platforms. First, an interrogation of how people and platforms converge in social media spaces is discussed in the first three articles. Then, articles four to six examine the nature and characteristics of the platforms as sharing spaces. Finally, the role and relationships between content creators, audiences, and knowledge platforms are debated in the last two articles of the issue.

This issue features a conversation with two leading scholars on communication and society. In the featured interview, Dr. Sun Sun Lim, an incoming professor of communication and technology at the Singapore Management University, talks to Dr. Ma. Rosel S. San Pascual about the value of ethical communication and media studies can help institutional and societal responses for current and emerging social issues.

The issue also presents Emerald F. Manlapaz's review of Miko Revereza's cinema. Interrogating the value of Revereza's use of home videos as transformative forms that translates private moments to public discourse, Manlapaz joins the interrogation of mediated platforms as spaces for musings about one's self and one's advocacies. Indeed, we must cultivate new narratives, cinema, and artistic forms to unleash reflexivity on memories and fantasies.

On social media platforms

Putranto and colleagues forward the idea that social media platforms help shape capitalist industries by accentuating consumerism. In this paper, the authors pinpointed how Instagram's affordances and functions co-create the vision of a metrosexual man, which, in turn, reinforces buying behaviors in cosmopolitan Indonesia. Therefore, one may ask how indirect consumerist platform practices on Instagram impact the capitalist industry.

Akinyetun adds to the relationship between the platform and the performatives that come with participation in social media spaces. The

author argues that social media continue to flourish as a relevant tool for political participation, mainly because social media platforms can create political activities and ensure participation. In this study, the researcher adds to the conversations about the defining role of social media platforms in making or breaking democratic spaces.

Effendi and colleagues dig deeper into the role of social media platforms in preventing religious-based radicalization in Indonesia. The article shows the malleability of platforms in serving the purposes of their users and audiences. In this research, Instagram initiatives in Indonesia have been described and discussed to show how counter-radicalization strategies can be actualized, supported, and grown through people-centric participatory online collaboration.

On sharing platforms

Alcantara and Demeterio look into YouTube as a form of participatory culture. The authors looked into self-sexualization or thirst trapping as a variant of the selfie culture in a sharing platform. Content creators create provocative sensual and sexual content not only to subject themselves to objectification but also to gain a following and sustain attention. The study claims that through the forms, style, and scope of YouTube videos, one can sexually position oneself to monetize their content.

Liwanag's article interrogates the nature and role of mobile games, mainly shooting games, as platforms for political myth-making in the Philippines. Using Barthesian semiology, the author surfaces how games frame the Duterte presidency's war on drugs and position the president as a protagonist in the narrative. The research connects the rhetorical strategies used in mobile game narratives and how these strategies emphasize political myths in the country.

Medriano and Torio also argue about the capacity of platforms to produce active yet contested social representations about rituals. Using the 2019 Traslación Facebook pages as case studies, the researchers found that online participants of the religious ritual treat the Facebook page as a spiritual space, reinforcing the mediatization of religion. Individual participation in Facebook also enables them to share their spiritual experiences and, in the process, enrich the discourses of the plurality of religious expressions and continuously build the role of new media as grounds for religious practices.

On knowledge platforms

Sivallana and Flor's article looks into the discursive process of using Facebook as a knowledge-sharing platform for public communication. The research uses a state college as a case to reflect on how institutions use

dialogic communication to converse and establish connections with their public. Findings, however, show that the knowledge platforms are not yet maximized as the state college still uses one-way strategies to disseminate information with very limited active engagements between the state college and its public.

Dela Cruz and colleagues also studied knowledge platforms. The research analyzed four higher education institutions' websites by unpacking their self-representations of universities. For example, public affairs offices inside higher education institutions communicate culture and power by positioning universities as spaces for teaching, research, and extension services. Further, higher education institutions consistently attempt to self-present themselves as capable bodies for knowledge-building purposes.

I thank all the scholars who contributed their work to this issue. Your research sustains the academe's growing attentiveness in interrogating people's role in co-shaping platforms.

I thank the reviewers for their comments and recommendations. Your insight led to this fruitful December 2022 issue.

I would also like to offer my deepest gratitude to the cover artist, Dr. Jualim D. Vela of the UP Los Baños CAS Department of Humanities, for artistically interrogating the subject matter. Indeed, the visual and performing arts must work hand-in-hand with the sciences to bring the message across to audiences.



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