The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus
In-depth critical analysis of the forces shaping the Asia-Pacific...and the world.

Indignez-Vous! 'Fukushima,' New Media and Anti-Nuclear Activism in Japan 「腹を立てよ！」フクシマ、新しい伝達手段、日本における反核運動

Nicola Liscutin

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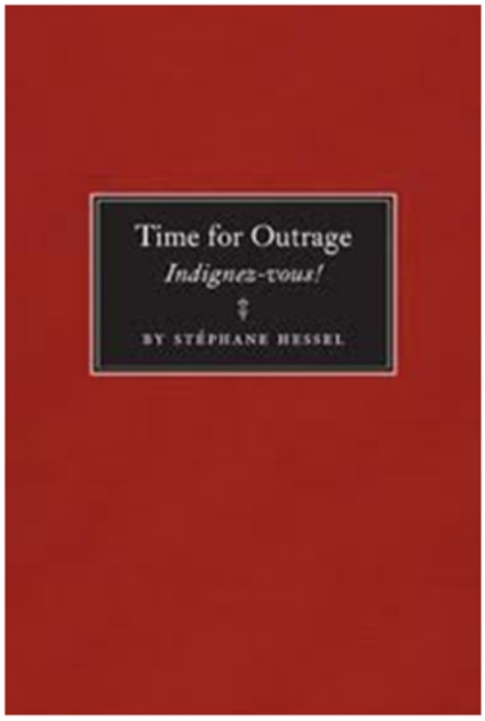
Good-bye Gempatsu Demo. From: Sekai kara gempatsu nakusō konsāto burogu[1]

Indignez-vous! Get angry, resist and fight against the blatant social injustices in our world! Thus Stéphane Hessel, the 93-year old French former Resistance fighter, called on the youth in France, and everywhere else, in his inspirational pamphlet published in France in 2010. It has since been translated into dozens of languages, though not yet into Japanese.[2] Indignation, for Hessel, provided the fundamental motivation for the Resistance movement in Nazi-occupied France, and he finds plenty of reasons for outrage today.



Following Hessel's cry for a non-violent, democratic uprising, young Spanish protestors named their movement 'the Indignant.' Although Hessel does not draw explicitly on his philosophy, it was Spinoza who highlighted in his *Ethics* and, especially, in his unfinished *Political Treatise* (both published posthumously in 1677) the motivational power of indignation incited by 'some common injury' that goads citizens to revolt against those in authority.[3] 'Human beings,' in Spinoza's influential formulation, 'are led more by affect than reason' – from which follows that 'the multitude' is led by 'some *common* affect.'[4] Spinoza wisely anticipated that 'the power of the commonwealth, and its right, are diminished insofar as it offers causes for more human beings to conspire together.'[5]

Anti-nuclear activism in Japan has grown at astonishing speed in response to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear crisis and its handling by the authorities. Over the past months, not a week has gone by without anti-nuclear protests taking place somewhere in Japan (see the nation-wide action calendar). In September, an intriguing array of new and established citizens' movements had called for an 'anti-nuclear action week' that was packed with rallies, lectures, symposia, film screenings, exhibitions and various other events. On 9.11, protests were staged across Japan, with three demonstrations in Tokyo alone. The action week culminated in a c. 60,000 people rally in Meiji Park on September 19 (link) kicking off a movement to collect 10 million signatures for the *Sayonara Gempatsu* petition (link). Given that by the summer, forgetting seemed already to have begun, at least beyond Tōhoku,[6] the nation-wide spread of these protests and their demographics are remarkable: from seasoned demonstrators to the many who confessed that this was their very first protest action; from families bringing their toddlers and children, to teenagers, students, freeters, the middle-aged, and pensioners. These demonstrations may still be small by comparison to the largest historical demonstrations, but as Karatani Kōjin emphasized in his speech at the Shinjuku rally, 'by demonstrating we create a society that will protest.'[7] He urged the Japanese to at last 'own' their fundamental democratic rights by exercising them. It now looks as if many Japanese have taken Karatani's rallying cry to heart, for anti-nuclear events continue across the country and across the social spectrum.

Are we witnessing the formation of a 'multitude' in Japan rallying around the issue of nuclear energy and rising up against the 'atomic village' (*gempatsu mura*)[8]? This might be wishful thinking. Yet, the '*ikari*' (anger) signs on the many flags of the large Fukushima contingent, and the quotes from *Indignez vouz!* on some posters, at the *Sayonara Gempatsu* rally bespoke the very real sense of indignation (with more than just a nod to people's uprisings in Arab countries, Spain, or Greece). Even the mainstream media could no longer afford to ignore this impressive anti-nuclear power demonstration, which drew individuals and organizations from all over Japan to gather in the capital and place center stage the plight of the victims of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear crisis in particular, and the nuclear power system in general. This indignation - the outrage at being 'abandoned' (*hōki sarete shimatta*) by the forces of the 'atomic village' – appears to fuel the development of new forms and movements of resistance in Japan. In order to affect change, this fairly loose network of anti-nuclear activist groups has to 'connect to act'[9] and shape as it were, 'a *strategy* of indignation.'[10] To these ends independent alternative media are playing an important role, as I hope to show in this paper. I shall focus here on forms of participatory/civic journalism through Internet-based TV media, which position themselves between intervention (media activism) and alternative news production; between promoting awareness-raising and witnessing/ documentary record-keeping, and which, in sum, contribute significantly to the formation of networks of solidarity. Typically, these media aim to encourage people to become 'mediactive'[11] and to participate in, or create their own, issue-based social networks. In comparison to Canada and the US, civic journalism (and public access media) is still a fairly recent phenomenon in Japan. Events since 3.11, however, have given the development of Japanese civic media a strong push and highlighted the importance of their role as social intermediaries (and networking mediators) for a citizenry that has grown frustrated with the information politics of the state and its allied mass media.[12]

Research on the connections between new media and (new) social movements – the ways in which social movements utilize ICTs (information and communication technologies) for protest, and the ways in which ICTs affect the formation and structure of social movements – has been flourishing over the past 10-15 years. Studies on the 'network society,' on the associations between networks, communication and social movements (Castells[13], Diani[14]), on cyberprotest and media activism (van de Donk et.al.[15]; Kellner and Kahn[16]) or alternative, 'we' and Indy-media (Atton[17]; Couldry and Curran[18]; Bowman and Willis[19]; Pickard[20]; Lievrouw) – to list just a fraction of the recent research areas – have offered important insights into the consequences of the new communication technologies and their utilization on political processes, and contributed significantly to the debate on whether new media have (or will?) radically transformed democracy. But as several researchers admit, the theory on new media and social movements is fated to be outrun by both the rapid development of ever 'newer' communication technologies (and their usage) and the recent proliferation of people's uprisings around the globe. For example, the many excellent studies of alternative media that focus largely on Indymedia – both the phenomenon and the brand – created in the context of the anti-globalization protests at the WTO Meeting in Seattle in 1999. But the role of mobile live-/video-streaming technologies or Twitter in communicating, and reporting on, for instance, the uprisings in Arab countries or, for that matter, the new anti-nuclear activism in post-3.11 Japan have yet to be fully analyzed. My investigation aims at contributing some empirical material and qualitative analyses to the enquiry into the usage and (potential) effects of live-/video-streaming alternative media.

To grasp the possibilities, and make sense of the complexities, of these new (visual) mediation technologies and their adaptation by alternative, independent media outlets, I have found three studies particularly useful: Lievrouw's concept of mediation and her analyses of the 'genres' of new media (2011)[21]; Deuze's work on 'participation, remediation, and bricolage' as 'principal components of a digital culture' (2006)[22]; and Castells' seminal study *Communication Power* (2009), in which he argues that 'power is primarily exercised by the construction of meaning in the human mind through processes of communication enacted in global/local multimedia networks of mass communication, including mass self-communication.'[23] I return to these studies below, but want to look briefly here at those concepts developed by Castells, which have provided motivation and framework for my modest study of independent, Internet-based TV media in Japan and the ways in which these alternative media seek to intervene in the 'communication networks that organize socialized communication.'[24] In the contemporary network society, 'programming/reprogramming' and 'switching' (i.e. connecting different) networks are, according to Castells, the 'two basic mechanisms' by which power is exerted and sustained.[25] 'Programming' refers to 'the ability to generate, diffuse, and affect the discourses that frame human action.' 'Switching' refers to the control over connecting different networks for the purpose of 'strategic cooperation.'[26] While corporate global networks of mass communication (Castells uses as one example Murdoch's media empire) hold much network-making and programming power and seek to preserve their hegemonic position by switching and gatekeeping, the new digital communication technologies also facilitate interactive, horizontal networks which 'decisively increase the autonomy of communicating subjects vis-à-vis communication corporations, as the users become both senders and receivers of messages' and enable the emergence of what Castells calls 'mass self-communication.'[27] Castells' proposition concerning practices and goals of mass self-communication seems particularly pertinent to my investigation. In fact, it presciently anticipates the reprogramming efforts of the new media I scrutinized for this paper:

'… by developing autonomous networks of horizontal communication, citizens of the Information Age become able to invent new programs for their lives with the materials of their suffering, fears, dreams, and hopes. They build their projects by sharing their experience. They subvert the practice of communication as usual by squatting in the medium and creating the message. They overcome the powerlessness of their solitary despair by networking their desire. They fight the powers that be by identifying the networks that are.'[28]

The poetic, emotional tone of Castells' call to fully utilize the opportunities afforded by mass self-communication might surprise, but a fascinating and challenging strand of his study examines 'the interaction between emotion, cognition, and political behavior'[29] in order to understand 'how power is constructed in our minds through communication processes.'[30] To this end, he draws on the work of neuroscientist Antonio Damasio as well as affective intelligence theory in the field of political communication research, both of which highlight the primacy of emotions and feelings – what Spinoza called affects and affectations – and not reason, in motivating (and prompting) people to act in particular ways or to take decisions. This means that the 'most powerful symbols are found in pictures and sounds that tap into primary group experiences of things that promote pride or satisfaction or tap into reservoirs of fear or revulsion. … Meaning is invested with emotion. It is far distant from cool rationality.'[31] Castells investigates the role of emotions in shaping political behavior with two case studies from the opposite ends of the spectrum of communication power: namely the mobilization of patriotism and anxiety in connection with the US government's campaign for the Iraq War in 2003, and citizens' anger (or, as Spinoza would term it, indignation) which, mediated by mobile/wireless communication technologies, dramatically altered the outcome of the Spanish elections in 2004. The latter example demonstrates that citizens can (and do) resist specific framings of information offered through mass media and political statements, and instead construct autonomous networks of communication to circulate alternative information, images … and emotions. My interest in examining the activities of alternative, Internet-based TV/live-streaming media in Japan derives precisely from such questions: how do these media construct networks of communication, frame messages, and seek to influence hearts and minds within the context of the ongoing Fukushima Daiichi nuclear crisis?

Challenging the Gatekeepers of Information

Thanks to the wealth of insightful and informative articles on the natural and nuclear disasters in Japan published over the last eight months in *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, it is unnecessary, I believe, to detail at length the background against which new citizens' movements have taken shape, and alternative news and social media have achieved such prominence. It may suffice to point out that in its aftermath, 'Fukushima' –

now global shorthand for the latest major nuclear disaster – not only exposed the systemic shortcomings of the risk calculus on which the 'safety myth' of nuclear power rests, but crucially the 'institutionalized non-coping' when 'residual risk' manifests as catastrophe.[32] A horrified and stunned Japanese public watched, and especially in Fukushima and neighboring prefectures suffered, as the collusion between nuclear industry, politics, regulatory bodies (e.g. NISA, NSC), scientists (*goyō-gakusha*), and mass media became blatantly obvious in the withholding of vital information; haphazard evacuation measures; arbitrary raising of radiation exposure limits; inadequate, belated radiation monitoring as well as decontamination efforts, and the list goes on. Kodama Tatsuhiko summed this up succinctly in his well-known critical statement to a parliamentary commission in July, and has continued since to critique administrative and political failings.[33] Ulrich Beck defines such 'organized irresponsibility' as 'the coexistence of responsibility [*Zuständigkeit*] and impunity [*Unzurechenbarkeit*] – to be precise, responsibility *as* impunity.'[34] It is, Beck suggests, a logical outcome of the 'central contradiction' of modern society, exemplified by nuclear power, namely 'the fact that the world is confronted by large-scale threats whose origins lie in the triumphs of modern society (more industry, new technologies)' but which are threats of a potentially self-annihilating scale that 'have cancelled the insurance principle, not only in the economic sense, but also in the social, medical, psychological, cultural and religious senses.'[35]

Precisely because the all too close links between the aforementioned sectors of the 'atomic village' became so conspicuous in the concerted attempts of controlling information (most visibly in the joint press conferences given by Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), government ministries and regulatory bodies), public distrust vis-à-vis their safety assurances grew in tandem with demands for the 'truth' in the form of reliable information. At least to those people with some knowledge of nuclear power plants, it became clear quite quickly that neither the nuclear power plant operators nor the government ministries and regulators were offering the full picture of the nuclear disaster and its effects on the population. The government lamely argued later that this was meant to prevent the outbreak of a panic … Also, TEPCO, the government, and NISA may well have been incapable of providing comprehensive information given the fairly large number of 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns' as to what (had) happened inside the reactors and fuel pools.

The Japanese mass media, regarded as the fifth column of the 'atomic village,' supported the official strategy of downplaying the nuclear disaster thereby showing themselves at the time, as little more than the mouthpiece of the government and TEPCO.[36] The trouble is that they occupy the hugely influential, if occasionally Kafkaesque role of the gatekeepers to information. Their audiences, especially in Fukushima Prefecture, whose access to news was severely restricted due to power-cuts, interruption of newspaper publication and delivery services and who, understandably, wanted to believe that conditions were not as bad as they looked, were quite receptive to those safety assurances uttered by government representatives and allied scientists … with sometimes dire consequences.

In their recently published book *Hōdō saigai 'gempatsu-hen'*[37] [Journalism-made disaster: the nuclear power chapter], independent journalists Uesugi Takashi and Ugaya Hiromichi level fierce criticism against the Japanese mass media which, in their view, effectively deserted the population they were supposed to inform, by silently withdrawing their staff behind a 50-km evacuation line (in contrast to the official 20-km evacuation zone then set up by the government for the people living around Fukushima Daiichi). While for several weeks after 3.11, the mass media suspended investigative journalism on site, i.e. within the 50-km zone, they nonetheless promulgated the government's line that the risk of radiation escaping from the reactors and thus the risk of irradiation to the population of Fukushima and the Tōhoku and Kantō areas were 'minimal.' Thus, in the early days of the disaster, it was up to independent Japanese and foreign journalists[38] to gather data, impressions, testimonies, and visual material from within the 20-km evacuation zone and to provide, together with independent experts such as Koide Hiroaki, Takeda Kunihiko, and Gotō Masashi, information on the situation in Fukushima. This coincided with the rapidly increasing number of people within and without Fukushima Prefecture, who turned to Internet and Twitter for information: the blogs, lectures, interviews of Koide, Takeda and, eventually, Noro Mika of the NGO Bridge to Chernobyl became highly influential sources for a public that felt abandoned by mass media and government.

What was (and still is[39]) meant to be tightly controlled, i.e. the official dissemination of knowledge, led unintentionally to the opening up of a space, in which alternative news/social media and movements such as the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (CNIC) suddenly became crucial providers of independent, critical information. Here, I shall focus on a few representative examples of these alternative information providers. I have selected these, firstly, according to their level of open access and independence and, secondly, by following Leah Lievrouw's useful categorization of five 'genres' of alternative and activist media. Lievrouw distinguishes these five genres – culture jamming, alternative computing/hacking, participatory journalism, mediated mobilization, and commons knowledge – on the basis of the 'different domain[s] of social life, culture, or technological practice'[40] to which each of these genres is related. Each genre has a specific, though not fixed, form and purpose. For instance, 'participatory journalism' typically takes the forms of online news services, blogs, Indymedia or, as in this study, of independent, live-streaming TV media, whose purpose is to offer alternatives to mainstream reporting and opinion making. The social domain to which this genre relates is obviously 'news, commentary, and public opinion.' 'Commons knowledge' has, in Lievrouw's definition, the purpose to mobilize 'outsider,' independent expert, or amateur knowledge and to share this knowledge in an open-source like manner.[41] She emphasizes that these genres are 'active, dynamic modes of communication and expression that change with their users' circumstances and interests' as well as with the adaptation of 'newer' communication technologies.[42] I shall focus on two genres in particular, participatory journalism and what takes, in my view, a form of 'commons knowledge,' but will also draw on some of the relevant features of 'mediated mobilization'.

Alternative, Internet-based TV media share some practices with 'traditional' mass media in terms of the formats they produce (e.g. reportage, interviews) and an 'archival habit' that is, a 'sustained commitment and reliable record-keeping in order to function effectively as a credible information source.'[43] However, in terms of their values and ethos, these new media differ from mainstream Japanese media in two important respects: first, they firmly believe in the maxim that 'true' democracy can be achieved and sustained only 'if citizens are engaged in an interactive process of social inquiry.'[44] Second, they regard 'journalism as a kind of collective inquiry into public life, a process of interactivity in which contributors influence one another.'[45] Thus, unlike the gatekeeping editorial model of mainstream journalism that rests on the binary of professional producers of news vs. recipients who are to be educated and guided, these new media with their emphasis on interactivity strive for a practice of 'journalism-as-participation' in which, potentially, every user can become a contributor and 'citizen journalist.' Indeed, numerous bloggers, YouTube and Twitter users draw freely on the contents of these Internet-based TV media to select, combine with other news and information items, reassemble and remediate, in a kind of bricolage[46], such contents for their own purposes. Later in this paper, I shall provide an illustration of how these processes work. Practices of participation, horizontal, i.e. non-/anti-hierarchical lines of communication as well as connectivity, which these alternative media outlets cultivate, articulate with the changed viewer/user expectation that has become even more pronounced in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster – namely the expectation of not just to be spoken to, but to be heard.

These Internet-based TV media usually operate in a media-mix mode (e.g. using Twitter and other social media alongside their broadcasts), and one may well argue that Twitter has been of greater importance since the 'triple disaster' of 3.11. My focus on alternative TV-media derives from the observation that as time passes and the tension between forgetting and remembering increases, visual mediation of the Fukushima Daiichi disaster and nuclear issues appears to gain in significance.[47] This, I would argue, can be attributed to the affective power of images

(and sound) in generating feelings of empathy, identification and solidarity, but also of indignation.

The Power of Shared Knowledge

When images of the explosions in the Fukushima Daiichi reactors began to flicker on TV screens and mobile phone displays accompanied by official assurances that all was under control and no harm would come to the population, many people in Fukushima and the Tōhoku and Kantō regions experienced what Castells calls 'an extraordinary level of cognitive dissonance,' which is to say, a huge gap between the fear-triggering force of the images and the framing of official statements. They thus turned to Internet and Twitter for alternative sources of information. As many readily admit today, they had so firmly believed in the safety myth propagated by the mighty PR apparatuses of Japan's nuclear power industry that until 3.11, they had not sought (nor seen the necessity) to educate themselves, independently, about Japan's nuclear power plants (NPP). However, those explosion images resonated with memories of images and stories of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster (though interestingly not with the nuclear bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Many Japanese citizens then threw themselves into learning about nuclear power and nuclear disasters.

Let me therefore begin this examination with an organization that dedicates itself to sharing independent expertise about nuclear energy: The CNIC, Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (*Genshiryoku shiryō jōhōshitsu*), based in Tokyo is an established non-profit organization that since 1975, has been active in 'collecting and analyzing information related to nuclear energy including safety, economic, and proliferation issues and to conduct studies and research on such issues.'[48] Until the Fukushima Daiichi disaster, CNIC mainly used their homepage, printed/downloadable newsletters, and 'public education seminars' to inform the public about their research and findings. After 3.11, however, their staff and researchers were overwhelmed by hundreds of telephone and email requests for information on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. The huge demand for reliable, independent information threatened to paralyze CNIC's work, as Sawai Masako explained at a recent symposium.[49] CNIC then decided to set up their own 'news' program on Ustream, an easy-to-use, versatile and cheap live-casting and online video-streaming technology that became available in Japan in 2010. From March 12 to 20, CNIC held daily press conferences in Japanese, and for the Foreign Correspondent Club in Tokyo in English. These were usually around 90 to 120 minutes in length. After March 20, these press conferences continued on a regular basis or as the emergence of news dictated, but were eventually replaced by 'CNIC News' and programs on specific issues or interviews with various expert guests.

The press conferences were aired live on CNIC's Ustream.tv Internet channel as well as recorded for its YouTube, and Vimeo video archives, thereby dramatically accelerating CNIC's outreach and multiplying the number of its 'viewer-users.' Since the server capacity of a Ustream channel can (and in fact did) hamper access of large numbers of viewers, CNIC press conferences and news bulletins were simultaneously broadcast live on other Internet-based Ustream or video streaming channels such as JunsTV, videonews.com, or Web Iwakami, thus reaching even more people. Because of the multiple, simultaneous broadcasting outlets for CNIC news, it is difficult to estimate the actual number of CNIC viewers, but at the height of the Fukushima Daiichi crisis, CNIC news programs appear to have been compulsory viewing for many people and, it should be added, journalists in Japan. There may well have been 1-2 million viewers who watched the programs regularly. The contents of their press conferences were, moreover, disseminated in tweets and blogs: crucial information on the nuclear crisis thus spread at high speed across a growing, potentially nation-wide, social-networking community.

Thanks to video archives, these press conferences and 'CNIC News' can still be watched today. They offer intriguing insights into the processes by which events, as they unfolded at Fukushima Daiichi, were analyzed, 'translated' and edited into concise, yet detailed information material for CNIC's press conferences, to then be remediated by Twitter users, blog authors, independent media, and foreign mass media. The strength of CNIC news programs lies undoubtedly in their recourse to solid expert knowledge. For instance, at the aforementioned press conferences held daily for the Foreign Correspondent Club until March 19, Gotō Masashi, a former nuclear engineer of Toshiba, who had been involved in designing and testing containment vessels of reactors such as those at Fukushima Daiichi, was one of the speakers interpreting the available data on the state of the reactors cores and vessels for the present journalists and Ustream watching audiences. On some of CNIC's news programs, former Toshiba nuclear engineer Ōgura Shirō and Sakiyama Hisako, former head researcher at the National Institute of Radiological Sciences, joined Gotō. As early as March 15, Gotō with his knowledge of the containment vessel's design suggested that 'meltdowns' seemed to have occurred in reactors no. 1 and 3, a fact that TEPCO and the government carefully avoided stating, and to which TEPCO admitted only two months later. The press conferences and news programs of the first weeks were accompanied by statements and petitions (March 18, 28, and 31), in which CNIC urged the government and its Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) to acknowledge the risk of irradiation, evacuate people at least up to a zone of 30 km, increase monitoring within and beyond the 30-km zones, and release full information. None of this, as we know, then happened, with the result that many people in Fukushima Prefecture (and beyond) were exposed unnecessarily to radiation, and had to decide by themselves whether to evacuate 'voluntarily' (*jishu hinan*), i.e. without any financial support or right to compensation.

Importantly, CNIC's untiring efforts in disseminating information on the crisis, functioned as a kind of intensive course on nuclear power for Japanese citizens who, like most of us (and most mainstream journalists), had little, if any, knowledge of the workings of a reactor, of meltdowns, radioactivity, millisievert and becquerel, the risks of external and internal irradiation and so forth. From late March onwards, CNIC News were broadcast every other day, sometimes every day, with Sawai Masako as anchor-woman and one expert guest focusing for around two hours in considerable detail on a particular issue.

As early as March 26, for instance, the expert was the aforementioned Dr Sakiyama explaining in lay terms the fallout of iodine and cesium from Fukushima Daiichi, and the potential risks for the health of the affected population. CNIC (as well as OurPlanet-TV) also offered live-stream and recorded seminars on how to use Geiger counters and dosimeters and how to interpret the measurements. These programs were especially aimed at empowering worried citizens to conduct their own radiation monitoring.

The no-frills setting for these news programs is provided by a simple seminar-room on the premises of CNIC, with a whiteboard for projections of visual material. The camera-angle positions the viewer quasi in the front row of that classroom, thereby enhancing the 'real time' effect of this educational program. Perspective, visual quality, and the occasional technical hiccups the viewer can witness, resemble the viewing experience of home-videos, but this informal setting – that is

Sawai Masako

followed through in the usually casual appearance of Sawai and her guests – also puts the (anxious) viewer at ease. While the broadcasts over the first couple of weeks after 3.11 were tangibly tense and rather formal, CNIC News today rather feels like sitting down with a group of like-minded people having a serious conversation about nuclear issues. The decisive difference between CNIC News and news or educational programs on mainstream TV channels is that CNIC's programs are *interactive* in that questions which viewers tweet or email, are answered in 'real time' in the show or form the subject for a subsequent program. Moreover, Sawai and her guests seem to take all the time needed to explore and explain a complex subject: there is no sense of pressure of running overtime, no explanatory or editorial shortcuts. Instead, Sawai often acts as an ordinary viewer questioning her expert guests on our behalf, in order to assure that the presentations are readily accessible and understandable. Through this emphasis on public participation, more and more viewers came to be involved in the knowledge building and information dissemination processes. On the other side, CNIC could expand its community of followers and supporters for campaign issues. For instance, the negotiations between CNIC and government and ministry representatives on issues such as the serious health risks to which the workers at Fukushima Daiichi are exposed, or the rather arbitrary raising from 1 to 20 millisieverts of the annual radiation exposure limit for people in Fukushima, were broadcast live in their entirety and apparently triggered a deluge of government-critical tweets. The '20 millisievert' issue, in particular, not only incited severe criticism from Japanese and foreign experts, but also a fervent campaign that, mediated by these Internet-based TV media and Twitter, came to be supported by a multitude of national and international NGO/NPOs as well as concerned individuals.

CNIC has managed throughout the crisis to maintain and, actually, strengthen its reputation as an authoritative, scientific, independent organization that pursues its aims through the dissemination of knowledge and good old lobbying work and to these ends, has tapped into the benefits of Internet-based visual media as well as social media such as Twitter. The main target of CNIC's critical work is the nuclear industry and the related regulatory bodies, as CNIC attempts to undo the 'safety myth' of nuclear power through knowledge building. Furthermore, the various campaigns show that CNIC seeks to change Japan's energy policies usually by way of established political processes and institutions as compared, let's say, to movements such as Shiroto no Ran's *No Nukes* or the *Sayonara Gempatsu* network, which aim to challenge the top-down political realities of Japanese democracy, as well. By sharing its expertise through live-streamed seminars and news, CNIC's efforts have an emancipatory, empowering effect on concerned citizens and many of the new anti-nuclear groups, which clearly grew in numbers and strength as their understanding of the scientific, environmental, and medical issues caused by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster increased. Turning to civic journalism and live broadcasting thus fundamentally altered CNIC's networking practices, and enhanced its educational mission tremendously.

Participatory Journalism I – 'Citizen Broadcasters'

Japanese mass media – one of the five columns of the 'atomic village' – are the target of critique, resistance and oppositional activism for a number of Internet-based, independent, civic TV media and, of course, innumerable blogs[50] and other social media sites as well as dozens of print publications. These critical new media have highlighted the shortcomings in the mass media's reporting on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear crisis and attempted to fill the significant information gap they left.[51] I shall concentrate on two independent, Internet-based TV media organizations – Web Iwakami and OurPlanet-TV. Both organizations are independent with regard to their concepts of broadcasting and journalism and, crucially, in relying entirely on donations of users and supporters, or income through workshops (OPT), symposia and publications as well as the work of volunteers. That is to say, unlike mass media companies and their outlets, they are independent of, and their programs free from, advertisements. Furthermore, their programs are free to watch and, unlike Nico Nico Dōga, a big, commercial player on the live-streaming and video-sharing market but also the non-commercial Videonews.com, do not require registration in order to enjoy their live and recorded programs.[52] However, users wishing to comment on, or contribute to, the programs of Web Iwakami and OurPlanet-TV need to register online in a way similar to YouTube users.

Web Iwakami and its IWJ (Independent Web Journal) were established by the freelance journalist Iwakami Yasumi, and began using one Ustream channel in spring 2010 (link). The IWJ motto is 'True Democracy,' and its main tool is direct, unedited, and 'real time' broadcasting, which aims at enabling viewers to form and contribute their own opinions. To this day, Web Iwakami broadcasts live the complete press conferences of TEPCO as well as governmental, ministerial and some local administrations' press conferences, of which mainstream media usually provide only small sound-bites or edited summaries.[53] One might wonder about the benefits of watching these press conferences, given the information value of what TEPCO and the government have been willing to release. However, as most independent journalists and media are barred from attending these official press club meetings, Web Iwakami's live broadcasting has been essential viewing for independent media keen to know the full contents of those meetings and to access this information at the same time as mainstream journalists. Though working freelance since 1987, Iwakami Yasumi has acted as a news commentator for several mainstream radio and TV media and appears to have press club accreditation. So after 3.11, his dedicated IWJ team camped out for weeks in the pressrooms of TEPCO and the government, covering and live-streaming the press conferences at all hours.[54] Besides, Iwakami (together with Tanaka Ryusaku and Terasawa Yu) was quite conspicuous at some of these press conferences by relentlessly asking critical questions that needed to be asked but usually weren't by mainstream journalists. Thus, Web Iwakami functions as a valuable information 'hub' for other independent (and foreign) media. Equally important, IWJ keeps a complete archive of all these press conference videos on its website and could thus catch out, more than once, politicians trying to deny their earlier statements. The 'archival habit' of IWJ might seem, at first sight, a bit erratic as not all of its programs are recorded and archived. A closer look reveals, however, that IWJ archives alongside the said official press conferences, all citizens' symposia and workshops, which it has live-streamed. IWJ thus provides a (free) recording service to these citizen groups and NGO/NPOs of the proceedings of their 'talk' events, and it does so in the explicitly stated recognition that 'information/knowledge is power.'

After 3.11, Web Iwakami increased the number of its 'general' channels initially to nine. Once the anti-nuclear power movement gathered pace

and demonstrations became more frequent and widespread, IWJ added in network fashion a staggering 93 regional channels to cover events from the 47 prefectures of Japan.[55] Each day's broadcasting schedule is continuously updated and is shown on the website as well as communicated by Twitter. On the sum of its channels, Web Iwakami streams on average 4 to 6 programs per day. Much of the live broadcasting for these regional channels is carried out by local IWJ volunteers[56] who are easily recognizable by their proudly displayed IWJ press armbands. The conspicuousness of these IWJ broadcasters at all nuclear issue-related events visibly transformed IWJ into a media brand. Castells points to 'the importance of branding in the source of the message' for establishing a recognized 'trust network' – it appears that Iwakami has managed to build this trust in his media brand in a very short time.[57] For Iwakami, an avid user of Twitter, combining Ustream with Twitter is essential to turn the real time broadcasts into interactive conversations among users and participants. Thus, Iwakami's 80.000 or so followers on Twitter will be alerted to the next live-streaming, can comment in real time on what they experience or watch, re-tweet his messages, or add further information. According to Iwakami, his followers come from all age groups and many are middle-aged persons or pensioners, some of whom, feeling empowered by Web Iwakami's participatory approach, have organized local lecture events with the man himself and joined local protest movements. Some are said to have even travelled to Tokyo for the September 19 rally. These ardent supporters also actively help to keep Web Iwakami financially afloat through donations.[58] The widening support for IWJ is clearly due to Iwakami's strategy of rigorously addressing both topical, 'big' political (e.g. Nuclear Energy, TPP, Okinawa) as well as social issues that are insufficiently (or not at all) covered by mainstream journalists. For instance, IWJ showed the arrests of protesters at the Shinjuku rally on September 11, interviewed some of the rally organizers, and broadcast the press conference from the Foreign Correspondent Club, where Karatani, Ukai Satoshi, Oguma Eiji, and Amamiya Karin protested against the unlawful arrests and stressed the importance of upholding citizens' constitutional right to demonstrate (link).[59] It seems fair to say that in its programming and crucially, in its framing of news, IWJ not only envisions but strives to *enact* direct/participatory democracy.

The 'live broadcasting citizens' (*chūkei shimin*), as Iwakami calls them, follow various events of activist movements with their smartphone cameras or webcams, and feed the images they record live into the regional IWJ Ustream channel, which can, however, be watched anywhere on the net. The result conveys, even if the image quality is sometimes shaky,[60] a strong sense of participation, of shared concerns and activism, of a *common* event. The viewer in Tokyo can now observe a demonstration in, say, Fukushima city or Okinawa as it happens. For the nation-wide demonstrations on June 11, for example, IWJ teamed up with OurPlanet-TV and Operation Kodomo to simultaneously live-stream the protests taking place at over 40 locations. A studio in Tokyo manned by IWJ and OPT staff coordinated the multi-channel live streaming and commented on the actions shown from different locations in Japan. The result of this concerted effort to network both the broadcasts and the demonstrations can still be seen in the archived videos of OurPlanet-TV – (link). The design of this webpage combining 46 YouTube video screens on a single page, visually constructs a multitude – a coming together of a diversity of people protesting against the politics of the national and global 'atomic villages.' That multitude extends outward from the 60,000 participants in the demonstration to sympathizers throughout Japan. By some adjustments to the page, the Internet savvy viewer can build a wall of screens not unlike the wall of monitors in a huge newsroom.[61] Likewise, participants at one of the three demonstrations in Tokyo on September 11 could watch, on their smartphones scenes from those taking place in other parts of the country.

The significance of being filmed/being watched – that is, being visible – in shared time weighs even more heavily, when those activists' events are ignored by main-stream media and are thus, as Jeff Kingston suggested, 'un-happened.'[62] On the one side, live broadcasting, even though its view is only partial, conveys the impression of witnessing a 'whole', 'authentic' event taking place within a shared time. On the other side, the variety of life-streaming videos highlights the existence of multiple perspectives on a news story or event. The nationwide, yet individual coverage by IWJ staff of anti-nuclear movements, their demonstrations, and other notable activities, thus contributes significantly to the formation of a sense of community (or, indeed, multitude) of anti-nuclear activists at a time when their numbers are indeed growing throughout Japan. Conversely, local anti-nuclear groups can be fairly certain that their protests will be covered by IWJ, or they can live-stream it onto an IWJ channel by themselves. In other words, IWJ coverage visualizes, visually mediates, and 'switches' networks of anti-nuclear activists throughout Japan, and thereby assists in generating and cultivating a collective identity. A functioning network is certainly essential to fashion a strong and effective nationwide anti-nuclear power movement and to support local groups who, unbeknownst to the majority of Japanese, have been fighting for years, often decades, against the construction and expansion of nuclear power plants in their locale.[63]

Just when I began to wonder, whether providing an alternative, civic media platform for live, unedited broadcasts of official press conferences on the one side, and of protests and events of anti-nuclear and other social/political activism on the other, really suffices to inform and mobilize people, network and support social movements, and to encourage participatory democracy, IWJ launched a new, pre-recorded, and edited program that dramatically alters, or perhaps expands, IWJ's practices of intervention and mediation. Iwakami's new interview series 'A hundred people, a hundred stories' commenced on November 7, and is shown on IWJ's Ustream Channel 9 on weekday evenings during 'prime-time,' i.e. from 9 pm JST (link). Realizing Iwakami's idea 'to make people's voices visible,' each installment of the series is dedicated to one person living in, or having evacuated from, Fukushima Prefecture. The interviews are designed to provide insights into the complex, always painful choices Fukushima's inhabitants have been forced to make since the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster shattered their lives and livelihoods or, at least, turned turned them upside down. So far all of the interviewees appear to come from areas *outside* the mandatory evacuation zones, e.g. from Iwaki, Koriyama, Nihonmatsu, Fukushima city and surrounding areas, and therefore would have (had) to opt for voluntary evacuation – or 'running away' (*nigeru*) as it seems to be regarded by some in their communities. This is a highly sensitive subject that is largely, if not completely, avoided by Japanese mass media and thus, very little known outside of Fukushima: 'Voluntary evacuation' is an issue that is dividing communities and neighborhoods, ripping apart couples, families, and friends and, as various experts argue, puts children's and adults' health at risk, when all that *should matter* is the human right to a life free of harm and thus, 'the right to relocate' (*hinan no kenri*).[64] As the second interviewee ponders – a young eco-farmer who moved with his wife and small kids to Hiroshima Prefecture shortly after 3.11 – this is a life-changing dilemma that potentially, any inhabitant of Japan might be forced to encounter given the combination of a large number of nuclear power plants with the frequency of earthquakes in Japan.

IWJ's interview program is in equal measure mesmerizing and distressing to watch, as many of the interviewees are palpably (and visibly) torn between feelings of responsibility, anxiety, rootedness, and loyalty, and many of them act or have acted against reason (in the critical scientific sense). Although one does feel occasionally like a voyeur peeping in on a therapy session (e.g. interview no. 3 and 5 – link), the visceral intensity of the interviews certainly engages the viewer's heart and mind. It brought back to my mind Spinoza's definition of 'indignation' as 'hatred toward him who has done harm to another' and the affective imitation inherent in being 'indignant at him who has injured *one like us*.'[65]

The camera angle in these interviews is such that the interviewee directly faces the viewer and thus frames the interview as a conversation between the interviewee and us/Iwakami. Iwakami, who conducts the interviews, cannot be seen and on the whole, his questioning cannot be heard, as his questions are projected as surtitles at the side of the image or between the 'chapters' of the interview. The age range of the interviewees so far lies between mid-20s to mid-50s years of age, with an equal number of women and men interviewed. The social background of the interviewees seems representative, too: single/married men and women, single mothers, young and middle-aged fathers, farmers, businessmen and -women, full-time housewives/mothers, DJ, barman and an aspiring Buddhist priest. The hits of each of the recorded/archived versions of the first ten interviews (link) currently varying from 1,544 to 7,485 hits (unrelated to the order of screening) and

the number of tweets connected to each episode,[66] seem to indicate that the stories of certain interviewees gather more interest and possibly invite more empathy or identification than others. But it is much too early to draw conclusions, not least because there are another 90 interviews to be broadcast. The low viewing figures so far – the direct broadcasts had little more than 1.000 viewers each – are rather disappointing but may change as word about the series spreads through the Twitter- and blogo-spheres. The *NPJ* (News for the People of Japan) webpage recommends the series for viewing and provides the hyperlink; likewise the Save Child blog. But are these stories perhaps considered too personal, or not spectacular enough, to generate wider interest among IWJ users? In true Iwakami fashion, the interview series is a huge project of interpersonal communication *and* memory work that seeks to expand and affect viewers' understanding of the plight of Fukushima's citizens. It asks viewers to engage with these personal, yet representative stories, to connect with them emotionally and socially as people 'like us.'

As mentioned earlier, IWJ's approach strongly promotes active participation, interpersonal communication, connectivity, and creativity. While mass media construct their imagined national 'community' in a hierarchical relation as a passive audience for their commercial products of 'news' and 'information,' Iwakami in his vision of 'true democracy,' insists on a common right to free information and, crucially, horizontal lines of communication with the aim to shift power (i.e. the power of information/knowledge) to ever expanding networks of users. In an environment of closely controlled official communication and information, such a shift is of enormous significance. Web Iwakami is designed to facilitate 'communicative autonomy' which, as Castells puts it, 'is directly related to the development of social and political autonomy, a key factor in fostering social change.'[67]

Participatory Journalism II – 'Connect to Act'

OurPlanet-TV (OPT, www.ourplanet-tv.org), founded in 2001 and led by the charismatic Shiraishi Hajime, a former Asahi journalist, takes a more 'traditional' journalistic approach in its emphasis on investigative journalism and the formats it produces (i.e. reportage, documentary, interview). The professional editing of its videos, the provision of accompanying descriptive texts to its programs as well as the studio setting for its broadcasts further add to the 'traditional' feel: OPT broadcasts look 'just like' other TV news reports or serious interview programs but with a decisive critical edge to the subjects it covers. OurPlanet-TV is a recognized, registered NPO that relies on membership fees, donations, and income generated from consultation work and its intensive courses/workshops on civic journalism. It is firmly committed to a civic journalism agenda by providing information on a wide range of social issues usually not covered in the mainstream media, by training aspiring citizen journalists and running a public access media center, advising NGOs on the use of visual media to document their 'societal contributions,' and by explicitly inviting citizens and civic organizations to contribute news, videos and ideas for programs. OPT also selects and broadcasts documentaries produced by free lance journalists on its channel. As emphasized on their website 'Free speech is at the core of OurPlanet-TV. Empower yourself to make a stand and bring about change!'

OPT has its own YouTube and Ustream channels, accessible through its homepage, but since July 7, its weekly flagship program 'ContAct' (i.e. Connect to Act) can also be watched on the commercial satellite TV channel Asahi-Newstar, which enhances its accessibility and visibility.[68] Moreover, OPT archives all its programs and thus has a sizable treasure-trove of past reports and documentaries searchable by subject categories. OPT's (recorded) programs provide a good example of remediation processes, in which they function as significant nodes in expanding the network of 'anti-nuclear' movements. OPT videos can be found embedded on a large number of Japanese and English-language blogs and 'nuclear issue' websites, are re-circulated by YouTube users, some of whom add English, French or German subtitles to OPT's videos, or sometimes re-edit and cut them together with other material for new videos. In other words, despite its perhaps 'traditional feel', OPT programs are not merely sources of information, but also provide the bases for new forms of organization through communication. That is, the programs become source materials for new, creative actions carried out by a highly diverse group of users who, nonetheless, have shared interests and concerns, identify or empathize in one way or another with the contents and images of OPT's videos, and want to communicate their understanding of the programs among their own, individual social networks. I shall demonstrate these processes with a particular example of an OPT program later.

A fervent concern for social issues, for making a stand, guides OPT's editorial decisions as to which themes they will investigate and broadcast. This approach is clearly reflected in their intensive coverage of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear crisis: as of November 2011, OurPlanet-TV has broadcast around 90 documentaries, interviews, press conferences as well as lectures on the Fukushima disaster and nuclear energy, of which around 40 videos are concerned with the consequences of nuclear disaster on children's lives and health, and about 15 reports/interviews concern the plight of the workers at Fukushima Daiichi. This remarkable archive of video footage is complemented by some 50 news bulletins (i.e. written texts) accessible on OPT's website. Of course, this footage is increasing by the day.

As early as March 22, OPT broadcast the first interview conducted by Watai Takeharu with one of the Fukushima Daiichi workers (link), and five more interviews with T-san followed. Also in mid-March, OPT offered broadcasting time-space to the six independent JVJA photojournalists, who had investigated the area of up to 3 km around Fukushima Daiichi: on March 19, OPT's Shiraishi interviewed Morizumi Takashi and Toyoda Naomi, who look ever more exhausted from their five-day trip into the high-contamination zone of Fukushima as they report their spine-chilling findings (link). Not only did this brave photojournalist team find levels of radiation in Futaba-machi on March 13 that exceeded the measuring capacity of their Chernobyl-tested Geiger counters (namely, higher than 1 millisievert *per hour*), but they also found people still cycling there, because they had understood radiation levels in Futaba-machi weren't that dangerous.[69] Moreover, when Morizumi and Hirokawa Ryūichi measured, almost by chance, in Tsukidate (close to Date city) on March 15, they registered 60 microsievert per hour and in Itatemura over 100 microsievert per hour. Itatemura's inhabitants were evacuated from May 15 -- that is, two months later! Watching today this OPT video of historical importance, one cannot help but wonder how audiences would have reacted, had Morizumi/Toyoda's report been shown on NHK news back then, in mid-March. Would Itatemura have been evacuated earlier and its people thus saved from unnecessary irradiation? Would people have protested earlier and more vehemently? Futile questions, I suppose, but what this points at is the critical mass – in terms of viewer/user numbers – that independent media need in order to affect change in public opinion, but were still short of at the time. However, the case of Itatemura (and other 'hotspots') and, crucially, the plight of Fukushima's children, became one of those decisive turning points for independent media like OPT, which have since gained significant numbers of new users searching for reliable information and local news that cannot be found elsewhere.

OPT has come to the fore in raising awareness about the situation of Fukushima's inhabitants and mediating/mediatizing the development of what one might call citizens' self-help movements such as the Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation (*Kodomo o hōshanō kara mamoru Fukushima nettowâku* – link). From the very beginning of the anti-nuclear protests, '*kodomo o mamore*' (save the children!) became the central rallying cry around which people from all age groups and different backgrounds gathered. 'Children' became the rather overdetermined symbol employed to unite diffuse groupings of the anti-nuclear movement and to motivate a large variety of their activities. Children not only came to signify the ultimate 'Fukushima' victim as those members of society most vulnerable to irradiation (together with pregnant women), and those who most clearly placed Japan's future at risk but, moreover, their plight signified everything that felt wrong about the state's way of dealing with the crisis. The powerful images of children petrified as they are checked for irradiation by people in masks and full protective gear, therefore, should be seen as/in juxtaposition to the 'cute-fication' of nuclear power in cartoon figures like 'Pluto-kun' that

the nuclear industry's PR machines long churnd out to reassure nuclear power's safety. Surveying both the media activism and the various protests of anti-nuclear activists related to the Fukushima nuclear disaster, I would argue that no other symbol has such affective power and therefore, incites and sustains such widespread indignation as 'children.' The discourse on 'children' thus provides one of the most effective tools to reprogram communication networks *and* to connect (i.e. to switch) different networks of social movements.

The implicit and explicit support OPT's reports lend Fukushima parents concerned about their children's welfare, has been invaluable in an environment where voicing such worries has often been criticized as scaremongering, spreading false and damaging rumors, disloyalty or betrayal of one's community, or as hysterical behavior.[70] Speaking up publicly, let alone demonstrating for the right to relocate in Fukushima City or Koriyama meant taking the risk of being shouted down or shunned publicly. Yet things have changed over the last couple of months, as the Kodomo o Mamoru movement grew stronger, more confident and was instrumental in shaping the nation-wide network of 'anti-nuclear' parent activists. So whereas, for instance, only a tiny group of people turned up on September 11/12, at the protest in Fukushima City against the international conference sponsored by the Nippon Foundation and organized by the denialist government advisor Yamashita Shunichi, the event in Fukushima City 'Nakuse Gempatsu 10.30 Taishūkai' on October 30 drew a crowd of a hundred thousand, according to the organizers.

The 35 plus videos OPT broadcast on the issue of children's welfare in Fukushima and the Kanto region thus chart, from the perspective of the citizens, the development of the Fukushima Kodomo o Mamoru network, as it gathers pace in its fight against the 'organized irresponsibility' (or perhaps disorganized irresponsibility) of the state. When significant levels of radioactivity were discovered in April in the prefecture's two biggest cities, Fukushima City and Koriyama, parents began to worry increasingly about the wellbeing of their children. And so when MEXT (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) on April 19 decided out of the blue to raise the exposure limits to 20 millisievert per year, to avoid, as many suspect, costly and complex evacuations for the citizens of those cities and other Fukushima areas outside the 20km zone, indignation turned into outrage and concerned parents got together to protest and establish a 'self-help' network. OPT followed the parents as they descended upon MEXT demanding a meeting and answers as to the scientific and medical (not to speak of ethical) rationales behind the 20-fold increase of radiation exposure limits; their counterparts are a group of rather helpless looking, junior MEXT representatives (link).[71] Even today, the 90-minute video recording the parents' anger and the MEXT representatives' embarrassed silence has lost none of its dramatic force. If anything, it is even more heartbreaking in view of recent bizarre events.[72] OPT continued to broadcast the many subsequent meetings between the Fukushima Kodomo o Mamoru network (supported by Green Action Japan and Friends of the Earth Japan) and representatives of various ministries. One meeting attracted particular attention, namely that between children from Fukushima and Koriyama on the one side, and representatives of MEXT and the cabinet's Nuclear Safety Agency on the other, of which OPT edited a 30 minute program (link).[73] The children, of primary and junior high school age, are impressively eloquent in their questioning of government policies and their demands for 'group/class evacuation', and they show themselves utterly unimpressed by the bureaucrats' evasive and rather patronizing replies. From this program and its many years of experience of teaching filmmaking to children, OPT developed its most recent exciting project: a documentary about, and filmed by, these very children and their classmates (see project description and a call for funding at http://www.indiegogo.com/ourplanettv). This 2-hour documentary is in progress. It is scheduled to be screened in January 2012. Together with the 'A hundred people, a hundred stories' interview program of Iwakami, this OPT documentary is designed to offer insights into the hearts and minds of Fukushima inhabitants and Fukushima evacuees. These witnessing, testimonial projects of OPT and IWJ aim to influence the ongoing debates about the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear crisis and its consequences, and equally important, to stem the tide of forgetting.

Back in April, OurPlanet-TV set out to Fukushima to investigate the situation – to my knowledge, it was at that time one of the very few media, even among the independent ones, who made the effort to meet and speak with people living in Fukushima City and Koriyama, i.e. in non-evacuation areas. OPT produced some insightful and moving reports about the day-to-day worries and problems of Fukushima teachers, parents and their kids (e.g. this link). This OPT report was subtitled in English and had in its YouTube version alone around 15,000 viewers. It seems to have inspired a number of foreign media (e.g. Al Jazeera English, the German public TV channel ZDF) to follow these stories up with their own reportage. OPT's Shiraishi also visited the city of Nihonmatsu to interview its mayor, Miho Keiichi, who had created quite a stir among politicians, bureaucrats, and the '*goyō gakusha*,' by single-handedly deciding to organize whole-body-count examinations for children and pregnant women of his town (link).[74] In the interview, Mayor Miho passionately pleads for the unquestionable priority of life (over politics) and in ever so polite language challenges the official medical adviser to the prefectural government, Yamashita Shunichi, who, in early May, had given one of his infamous speeches about the 'safety' of radiation to the bewildered citizens of Nihonmatsu.[75]

During the course of her research in the Nakadōri area of Fukushima Prefecture, that is, the area outside the evacuated zones between 40 and 80 km from Fukushima Daiichi, Shiraishi heard many stories about children showing 'unusual or abnormal' physical symptoms. To investigate this further, OPT designed a questionnaire (still on its website) to collect data about what appeared to be low-radiation-related effects on children's (and adults') health. The investigation was announced on June 17 in OPT's ContAct program and the questionnaire publicized on its webpage, Facebook page as well as by twitter to all of OPT's followers. Over 500 questionnaires were returned. OPT then dedicated a special program on July 14 to these medical issues, in which Shiraishi discusses the disturbing findings with Noro Mika, director of the NPO Bridge to Chernobyl (*Chierunobuiri e no kakehashi*). This 30-minute program of OurPlanet-TV entitled '*Hōshanō de hirogaru ihen: Kodomotachi ni nani ga okite iru ka?*' (English subtitled version: 'Unusual phenomena spreading with radioactivity: what is happening to children?') has become the most influential, widely watched and remediated broadcast OPT has so far produced on the Fukushima nuclear crisis (link). It is worthwhile taking a closer look at the circulation and remediation history of this particular video, as it provides a good illustration of how a fairly small, socially engaged new media outlet like OurPlanet-TV can influence and potentially change the public's perception of the situation in Fukushima and its reaction to the consequences of the nuclear disaster.

As mentioned earlier, OurPlanet-TV had reached an agreement with the commercial satellite TV-channel Asahi Newstar. On July 14, the program was therefore broadcast simultaneously on OPT's Ustream channel (accessible both on its website and through the Ustream main-site) as well as on Asahi Newstar, where it was repeated on July 15 and 16. No figures are available as to how many people watched the program on the satellite TV-channel, unfortunately. In its YouTube incarnation alone, it had 114,567 views (as of Nov. 9) – this is a pretty good figure but still low compared to the number of views, which the video of an interview with Koide Hiroaki or the parliamentary statement of Kodama Tatsuhiko garnered. Details of the program were also disseminated by OPT tweets as well as on the online news-page 'The News' edited by the aforementioned Free Press Association of Japan, of which OPT is a member. A string of 431 tweets with comments registered on the OPT website – again, for a single OPT program this is a high number of tweets, but average compared to the number of tweets some Web Iwakami programs attract. However, once the video was uploaded on YouTube and Ustream, the circulation of the program accelerated: first, it was taken up and mirrored on a large number of video-sharing sites such as Nico Nico Dōga, Gakkō TV, videowatchr.com, A SEED-TV.org[76], and Himawari Dōga to name just a few, where it gathered yet more comments. There are 123 sometimes lengthy comments attached to the OPT YouTube version, to which another 800 or so need to be added from the above video-sharing sites alone.

The YouTube video of OPT's program then came to be embedded into a mind-boggling number of blogs (i.e. around 46,000), first and foremost the widely consulted/read Save Child (link) and NPJ (News for the People in Japan; link) but for example also, perhaps astonishingly, on the 'Social News' website of Rakuten, the biggest online shopping operator in Japan, which promises to provide news that cannot be found

in mainstream media.[77] The re-circulation of the OPT program on the Rakuten side may be regarded as an example for 'the major commercial interests … at play' on the Internet, which is not, as Kahn and Kellner stress, '*qua infrastructure* essentially participatory and democratic.'[78] While some of the blogs only offer a short description and the hyperlink for the video, others comment in some detail on the program, give it a different spin, criticize its message, recommend it to their friends, or offer their impressions for further discussion. The 'original' program thus travels in a kind of ripple effect through the *vast* spheres of the Japanese social network sites forming a long-lasting, potentially infinite conversation on the subject. Following 'netiquette norm,' these blogs reference and connect up with blogs of their peers as well as other 'online affinity groups' that coalesce around particular issues – in this case, radiation effects on children. Bloggers are thereby creating or shaping dynamic 'networks of interlinking solidarity'[79] and, it should be added, of empathy and indignation. Following the wide dissemination of the OPT program, in which Noro Mika had urged that children from Fukushima, especially those already showing symptoms, should at the very least spend the summer break in a healthier environment far away from Fukushima Daiichi, the number of NGOs and individuals from other areas of Japan and from abroad which offered to accommodate Fukushima children over the summer, increased markedly. The critical question remains whether the government, too, will respond to the wave of indignation that the program produced.

At that stage, the conversation was Japanese-language based and did not yet go 'global.' One blogger, whose website has the charming title 'Brainwash', then made the effort to transcribing the entire Japanese text of the program. This might seem insignificant, but the text was obviously referenced by the Japanese YouTube user 'tokyobrowntabby,' who added, in mid-October, her English translation as subtitles to the video. This YouTube user describes herself as Japanese, living in Tokyo and planning 'to create as many English-subtitled videos as I can, regarding the ongoing Fukushima crisis.'[80] She uploaded the subtitled video on YouTube on 20 October (link) and thus triggered another, English conversation wave three months after the broadcasting of the OPT program. In contrast to the short-span news value which mainstream media usually afford any one item of news, a story remediated and circulated through new/social media can, and will, remain a topic for conversation for as long as the participating social network users deem it significant. This significance can be both personal (for the individual user) and social (e.g. for a group or groups of activists). The *networked* memory of an OPT or IWJ story is thus significantly longer (and perhaps more intensive) than of reports by mass media outlets, and less 'perishable' than some new media researchers assume.

Observing tokyobrowntabby's YouTube channel on November 1, her subtitled English version of the OPT program went from 566 to 7,892 views within just 12 hours. How did that happen, you might ask. Apart from her 185 (+) subscribers, who are likely to have watched this video and recommended it in turn to their 'friends' and 'followers,' the subtitled video (like the first Japanese version) has been mirrored by other YouTube users, re-circulated in a still ongoing series of embeddings on English-language blogs most notably EX-SKF, Enenews.com, the Europe-based site radioactive.eu.com, and wn.com (World News Inc.), tagged on various facebook pages, or sent out as email alerts to friends. Furthermore, two of tokyobrowntabby's foreign YouTube peers then added the French[81] and German[82] subtitles to her video and uploaded these new versions on their respective YouTube channels on November 1, 2011. From there, the video with French subtitles was picked up and remediated on over 300 French-language blogs; the German version … and so on and so forth. Of course, this works also the other way round: some foreign mainstream media might be surprised to find their 'Fukushima' reports with Japanese subtitles on YouTube and then disseminated throughout the Japanese anti-nuclear blogosphere. Among the foreign favorites for such subtitled re-circulation on YouTube and Japanese blogs are hard-hitting reports by the correspondents of the German public TV channels ZDF and ARD …[83]

Outlook (in lieu of a conclusion)

The dynamic processes of remediation and re-circulation of this one OPT program on irradiation symptoms in Fukushima children, reveal how 'networks of interlinking solidarity' come into being, are sustained and widened through collaborative activities that cultivate collective (issue-based) identities.[84] These processes can be observed in all of the new media explored in this paper, that is to say, in the contents produced by CNIC, OPT and IWJ and refigured and disseminated through social media communities that coalesce around a whole range of Fukushima Daiichi related and anti-nuclear issues. Collaboration is one crucial aspect in these communication/mediation processes suggesting, as Castells and other new media scholars have argued, that the networked communication technologies reflect (and are adapted to) the network structure of a new social movement and not the other way round: a social movement's 'articulation over the Internet' becomes 'both its organizational form *and* its mode of action.'[85] The perhaps small, but nonetheless representative, example of OPT's program and the Internet-based remediation and communication processes through which it has been 'networked,' demonstrates how alternative media outlets such as OPT can intervene in, and subvert, the image and information manipulation by mass media: OPT conducted an investigation on a topic (i.e. low-level radiation effects) that remains utterly ignored by mainstream media but that speaks directly to public opinion. The same is valid for IWJ's latest interview series that intervenes in the official silence, with which the plight of 'Fukushima' victims is cloaked. Thus, by producing and distributing these programs through alternative, horizontal communication networks, OPT and IWJ implicitly shed light on the information strategies of the mass media (and the 'atomic village') and reprogrammed the public debate with their message that clearly touched a nerve in the public hearts and minds.

While I would not go so far as to attribute directly to OPT's program the coming-together of diffuse groups of 'kodomo o mamoru' proponents in the nation-wide organization formally established in late summer, it can certainly be argued that alternative media such as OurPlanet-TV, Web Iwakami and others not examined here function as crucial nodes in the emergent networks of anti-nuclear activism and as important facilitators in shifting communication power to their followers, users, and contributors, i.e. the people. In most cases, the new anti-nuclear movements can rely on these Japanese independent civic media to mediate, visually and verbally, their fears and hopes, their concerns, debates, protests and demands, and to share these mediations with the proliferating 'networks of interlinking solidarity.' As Lieuvrouw emphasizes in her study of *Alternative and Activist Media*, 'it is precisely this intersection and blending of message and channel, material and social, means and ends, offline and online, that is the distinctive characteristic of *mediated mobilization*.'[86] To what extent, and in what ways, such mediated mobilizations can affect broad(er) social change, are questions that future/further research will have to address. As I hope to have shown, Web Iwakami and OurPlanet-TV are clearly instrumental in empowering an increasing number of people to become 'mediactive' in response to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear crisis and the 'organized irresponsibility' of the 'atomic village.' Whether this empowerment and mediated mobilization will, ultimately, translate into *active* majority support, or rather demand, for a decisive shift in energy policies from nuclear to renewable energy, remains to be seen.

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Recommended citation: Nicola Liscutin, 'Indignez-Vous! 'Fukushima,' New Media and Anti-Nuclear Activism in Japan,' The Asia-Pacific Journal *Vol 9, Issue 47 No 1, November 21, 2011.*

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• Say-Peace Project and Norimatsu Satoko, Protecting Children Against Radiation: Japanese Citizens Take Radiation Protection into Their Own Hands

Notes

[1] Image of 'ikari' flags of the Fukushima participants at the Sayonara Gempatsu demonstration on September 19, 2011 – courtesy of this source.

[2] Stéphane Hessel (October, 2010), *Indignez vous!* Montpellier: Indigène editions. The English edition appeared in February 2011; the American edition: *Time for Outrage: Indignez vous!* was published by Hachette Book Group in September 2011. Worldwide sales of Hessel's pamphlet have topped 3.5 million.

[3] Baruch Spinoza (1677), *Political Treatise*, III, 9.

[4] *Political Treatise*, IV, 1. Emphasis added.

[5] *Political Treatise*, III, 9.

[6] See for example Mōri Yoshitaka's thoughts in his article 'From Shaking Islands: A Nation Divided' in *Cultural Anthropology – Hot Spots: 3.11 Politics in Japan*; 2011-07-27 available here - last accessed 2011-09-13. 'Do not forget' was also very much the tenor in the speeches by Ochiai Keiko and Mutō Ruiko at the rally on September 19.

[7] '*Demo suru koto de demo suru shakai wo tsukureru desu*.' Karatani Kōjin speech at Shinjuku Alta, September 11, available on YouTube last accessed 2011-09-13.

[8] 'Atomic village' – *gempatsu mura* – refers to the collusion between nuclear power industry, government, regulatory bodies, allied scientists (the so-called *goyō-gakusha*), and the mass media. The lawyer Utsunomiya considers the jurisdiction (courts and judges) to be part of the 'atomic village,' too.

[9] This is one motto of OurPlanet-TV, on which more below.

[10] Negri/Hardt (2009), *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 236.

[11] Coined by Dan Gillmor, a pioneer of participatory journalism and author of *We the Media* (2004) and the said *Mediactive* (2010).

[12] For (self-)reflections on the role of new media in the wake of 3.11 see for example the volume *Riarutaimu media ga ugokasu shakai* edited by Yagi Nobuyo et.al. (Tokyo Shoseki, September 2011) as well as *Jiyū Hōdō Kyōkai ga otta 3.11* edited by the Free Press Association of Japan (Fusosha, October 2011).

[13] Manuel Castells (1996), *The Rise of the Network Society*. And (1997), *The Power of Identity*; both Oxford: Blackwell.

[14] Mario Diani (2003), 'Networks and social movements: A research programme.' In Diani and Doug McAdam (eds.), *Social movements and networks: Relational approaches to collective action*. Oxford University Press, pp. 299-319.

[15] Wim van de Donk, Brian D. Loader, Paul G. Nixon and Dieter Rucht (eds.) (2004), *Cyberprotest: New Media, citizens and social movements*. London and New York: Routledge.

[16] Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner (2004), 'New media and internet activism: From the 'Battle of Seattle' to blogging.' In *New Media & Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 87-95. And (2005), 'Oppositional Politics and the Internet: A Critical/Reconstructive Approach' reprinted in Leah A. Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone (2009), *New Media, Vol. IV: Social Institutions, Structures, Arrangements*. Sage Publications; pp. 270-291.

[17] Chris Atton (2004), *An Alternative Internet*. Columbia University Press.

[18] Nick Couldry and James Curran (2003), *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World*. Rowman and Littlefield.

[19] Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis (2003), *WeMedia: How audiences are shaping the future of news and information*. Reston, VA: The Media Center at the American Press Institute. Retrieved November 2, 2011: http://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/

[20] Victor W. Pickard (2006), 'United yet autonomous: Indymedia and the struggle to sustain a radical democratic network' in *Media, Culture & Society* Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 315-336.

[21] Leah A. Lievrouw (2011), *Alternative and Activist New Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

[22] Mark Deuze (2006), 'Participation, Remediation and Bricolage: Considering Principal Components of a Digital Culture' in *The Information Society* No. 22, pp. 63-75.

[23] Manuel Castells (2009), *Communication Power*. Oxford University Press, p. 416.

[24] Castells (2009), p. 53.

[25] Castells (2009), p. 45.

[26] Castells (2009), p. 53.

[27] Castells (2009), p. 4.

[28] Castells (2009), p. 431.

[29] Castells (2009), p. 5.

[30] Castells (2009), p. 4.

[31] D. Leege and K. Wald (2007), 'Meaning, cultural symbols, and campaign strategies' quoted in Castells (2009), p. 191.

[32] See Ulrich Beck (2009), *World at Risk*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 27-9.

[33] See, for example, Kodama's contributions on the two-hour program 'Radiation and food' on Asahi Newstar of October 1, 2011 (link)

[34] Beck (2009), pp. 193-4; emphasis in original. For other important perspectives on the issue of 'irresponsibility' in relation to the nuclear disaster see for instance the article by Takahashi Tetsuya, 'Gempatsu to iu gisei no shisutemu' [The sacrificing system of nuclear power] in *Asahi Journal*, no. 5071, 2011-06-05, pp. 10-14; the conversation between Nishitani Osamu and Jean-Pierre Dupuy, '"Fukushima" ga aburidasu watashitachi no kyōtsū no mirai' [Our common future that 'Fukushima' has brought to light] in *Sekai*, no. 821, 9-2011, pp. 70-78.

[35] Beck (2009), pp. 30 and 27. At first, however, it was not so much Beck's concept of a global 'risk society' that came to my mind, when reflecting upon conversations with anxious parents and angry eco-farmers in Fukushima, but Giorgio Agamben's thoughts, in his *Homo Sacer* (1998), on how 'good life' (in the Aristotelian sense) comes to be stripped 'bare' in a state of exception.

[36] For a compelling critique of the role of the mass media in the expression of 'organized irresponsibility' see Sakai Naoki, '"Musekinin no taikei" mitabi' ['The system of irresponsibility' third time round] in *Gendai Shisō*, vol. 39-7, no. 5, 2011, pp. 26-33.

[37] Uesugi Takashi and Ugaya Hiromichi (July 2011), *Hōdō saigai 'gempatsu-hen'* Tokyo: Gentosha.

[38] Among the first to investigate the area around Fukushima Daiichi from March 12/13 were Hirokawa Ryūichi, chief editor of the journal *Days Japan*, Morizumi Takashi, Toyoda Naomi, Watai Takeharu, all members of the Japan Visual Journalist Association, David McNeill, and Donald Weber. In late March/early April, Jinbō Tetsuo, founder of the influential Videonews.com, and other independent journalists as well as Mizushima Satoru of the right-wing Channel Sakura, followed them. Jinbō Tetsuo's report on his journey into the evacuation zone had close to 1 million views in its YouTube version (I'm grateful to Michael Penn for alerting me to the popularity of this video), considerably more than the earlier OurPlanet-TV report of Morizumi and Toyoda, to which I shall return later.

[39] The government launched a costly program to screen and counter-act allegedly false rumours about the 'Fukushima' crisis and its consequences on Twitter, Facebook and other social network sites. On this issue, see the statement by Fukushima Mizuho at a diet assembly on July 25, 2011 (link)

[40] Lievrouw (2011), p. 19.

[41] Lievrouw (2011), p. 23.

[42] Lievrouw (2011), p. 22.

[43] Lievrouw (2011), p. 147.

[44] David Ryfe and Donica Mensing (2008). 'Participatory journalism and the transformation of news.' Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Chicago, August 6. Link last accessed on 2011-10-03. P. 19.

[45] Ibid. Ryfe and Mensing draw here on the vision of participatory journalism John Dewey proposed in his famous debate with Walter Lippmann in the 1920s.

[46] See Mark Deuze (2006), 'Participation, Remediation, Bricolage: Considering Principal Components of a Digital Culture.' In *The Information Society* no. 22, pp. 63-75.

[47] In recent weeks, screenings of 'nuclear issue' related documentary and feature films in Tokyo (but also at the Yamagata film festival or the

screenings of Kamanaka Hitomi's films) are solidly sold out, usually oversubscribed. Admittedly, my focus on visual media also derives from my current research project on such 'Fukushima' related films and their public reception.

[48] CNIC website last accessed on 2011-09-14.

[49] The symposium was entitled 'Media o uramu na, media o tsukure!' – echoing the watchword of *Indymedia* 'Don't hate the media – become the media!'

[50] Two interesting blogs should be mentioned here: firstly, that of the investigative journalist Kinoshita Kouta (link), the related 'Radiation Defense Project' (link) and its very large Facebook group 'Fukushima Daiichi Gempatsu o kangaemasu.' Secondly, the English-Japanese blog EX-SKF, which offers a wealth of important news, information and interesting comments on the ongoing 'Fukushima' crisis.

[51] For about two months after 3.11, most of the Japanese mass media (both TV channels and the press) just reiterated official statements (in condensed form) without, apparently, ever challenging any of the information they were given by TEPCO or the government or undertaking their own investigations. As the information manipulation became conspicuous, however, some TV production companies (e.g. for NHK ETV) and especially, *Tokyo Shimbun* and *Mainichi Shimbun* began to offer critical news and their own investigations. On this issue see also the aforementioned book by Uesugi and Ugaya, as well as the symposia on the subject of 'gempatsu to media' organized by the magazine *Tsukuru*, and published in numbers 7 and 9/10 of the magazine.

[52] Though Web Iwakami apparently considered changing over to a subscription channel before 3.11.

[53] In the first weeks after 3.11, Nico Nico Dōga, too, live-streamed \ press conferences with Tsuda Daisuke remediating them for Twitter. On request of virtually all big public and private TV stations (including NHK, Fuji TV and TBS), Nico Nico Dōga also streamed on its Internet-based channels the programmes of these stations and apparently reached a record number of viewers, some 15 million people. See Nanao Kō (2011), 'Higashi Nihon daishinsai to nikoniko namahōsō' in Jiyū Hōdō Kyōkai (eds.), *Jiyū Hōdō Kyōkai ga otta 3.11*, p. 56. Videonews.com also live-streamed some of the press conferences.

[54] During the first weeks after the nuclear disaster, TEPCO frequently held its press conferences in the middle of the night, for whatever reasons.

[55] Web Iwakami set up the 93 regional channels in time for June 11 and the anti-nuclear protests scheduled for that day, three months after the disasters.

[56] Already in June, Iwakami had recruited 200 local volunteers from among his Twitter followers. Iwakami Yasumi (2011), '"Jōhō no minshuka" – "Chūkei shimin" ni sasaerareta 3.11 hōdō' in Jiyū Hōdō Kyōkai (eds.), *Jiyū Hōdō Kyōkai ga otta 3.11*, p. 43

[57] Manuel Castells (2009), p. 419.

[58] Iwakami Yasumi (2011), 'Sōshal jânarizumu no kanōsei' in *IT Hihyō* vol. 2 (May 2011), p. 47.

[59] On this issue, see also David McNeill's article 'The right to peaceful protests' in *The Mainichi Daily News* of October 18, 2011, link last accessed 2011-10-22.

[60] However, workshops to teach keen citizens live broadcasting, launched in October, might help to improve video quality.

[61] See also the iPad installation of the 6.11 demonstrations (link).

[62] Jeff Kingston, 'Ousting Kan Naoto: The Politics of Nuclear Crisis and Renewable Energy in Japan,' *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol. 9, Issue 39 No. 5, September 26, 2011.

[63] Recently, the efforts of these local groups have won recognition through the increasing interest in Kamanaka Hitomi's documentary films such as *Hibakusha*, *Rokkasho mura rhapsody*, and *Mitsubachi no haneoto to chikyū no tenkai* (aka *Ashes to Honey*).

[64] The Fukushima Network to Save Children from Radiation and its supporters, e.g. Friends of the Earth Japan, Green Action Japan, have been fighting for months for this 'right to relocate' and for TEPCO/governmental 'evacuation compensation,' but the government continues to drag its heels on this urgent issue. The definition of '*hinan no kenri*' is based on evacuation rights and levels of irradiation of areas around the Chernobyl NPP. For a concise overview of the issues see Green Action Japan's blog. Moreover, extensive documentation can be found on the Friends of the Earth Japan 'hinan no kenri' weblog.

[65] Spinoza (1676), *Ethics*, II/157 P22. Emphasis added.

[66] Range of hits as of November 19, 2011.

[67] Castells (2009), p. 414.

[68] OPT, IWJ and other independent media have been campaigning for years to be given 'public access' channels on public television as well as for equal access to press club conferences.

[69] The 20 km zone was declared a no-go area only on April 22!

[70] See for instance, Hirokawa Ryūichi (2011), *Fukushima: gempatsu to hitobito*. Iwanami Shoten, pp. 123-177; Sotooka Hidetoshi (2011), 'Fukushima: Fuan no chi o aruku' in *Sekai* vol. 9, no. 821, pp.172-182; and in particular, the interview with Nakate Seiichi, the founder of the Fukushima Kodomo o mamoru network on OPT (link) And, of course, Iwakami's new interview program mentioned earlier, 'A hundred people, a hundred stories' on IWJ Channel 9.

[71] In its YouTube version, the program had over 60,000 views as of November 19, 2011.

[72] See for instance the stories of children's irradiation symptoms on the aforementioned blog by Kinoshita, or this hair-raising video of a parliament session on September 29 (link) -- an abbreviated version with English subtitles can be found here. As the EX-SKF blogger says, 'watch it at your own risk!' … followed by another similar story (link).

[73] Web Iwakami broadcast this meeting as well as the subsequent press conference the children gave in their entirety, parts of which can be found on YouTube and have been subtitled.

[74] In its YouTube incarnation, this interview had 22,300 hits.

[75] OPT also broadcast live Yamashita's presentation and Q&A session in Nihonmatsu (For the latter with English subtitles see this link). Well known is also the following YouTube video with excerpts from Yamashita's talks (with English subtitles).

[76] A SEED-TV stands for Action for solidarity, equality, environment and development.

[77] A Google search with the specific title of the program gives 214,000 results, though many of those are redundant duplicates.

[78] Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner (2009), 'Oppositional Politics and the Internet: A Critical/Reconstructive Approach' in Leah A. Lievrouw & Sonia Livingstone (eds.), *New Media – Vol. IV: Social Institutions, Structures, Arrangements*. London: Sage Publications, p. 274; emphasis added.

[79] Kahn/Kellner (2009), p. 282.

[80] See the 'about' column on tokyobrowntabby's YouTube page.

[81] French version: Link

[82] German version: Link

[83] For example, the following ZDF program which received 144.317 views in its Japanese version; or this WDR (ARD) program which received almost 70.000 views in its Japanese version.

[84] See Lieuvrouw (2011), p. 174-176.

[85] Castells (2009), p. 340; emphasis added.

[86] Lieuvrouw (2011), p. 161.