

INSTRUMENTAL TRANSCOMMUNICATION IN DIGITAL NETWORKS: HYBRID DEVICES ON THE BORDERLINE OF SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

TCI NAS REDES DIGITAIS: DISPOSITIVOS HÍBRIDOS NA FRONTEIRA DA CIÊNCIA E DA ESPIRITUALIDADE

TRANSCOMUNICACIÓN INSTRUMENTAL EN REDES DIGITALES: DISPOSITIVOS HÍBRIDOS EN LA FRONTERA ENTRE CIENCIA Y ESPIRITUALIDADE



<https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2026.008-155>

José Valentim Martins Melo¹, Edwaldo Costa²

ABSTRACT

This article examines Instrumental Transcommunication (ITC) as a hybrid communicational phenomenon in contemporary Brazilian digital culture. Through qualitative methodological triangulation, we analyze how ITC, mediated by electronic devices and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI), reconfigures discourses on grief, religious authority, and scientific legitimacy on digital platforms. The results reveal ITC as a symptom of technoculture, where belief and skepticism dispute regimes of truth through amateur scientification practices. We argue that this emerging field challenges paradigms of public science communication, demanding new epistemological approaches.

Keywords: Instrumental Transcommunication. Technoculture. Artificial Intelligence. Discursive Disputes. Digital Communication.

RESUMO

Este artigo examina a Transcomunicação Instrumental (TCI) como fenômeno comunicacional híbrido na cultura digital contemporânea brasileira. Por meio de triangulação metodológica qualitativa, analisamos como a TCI, mediada por dispositivos eletrônicos e Inteligência Artificial Generativa (IAG), reconfigura discursos sobre luto, autoridade religiosa e legitimidade científica em plataformas digitais. Os resultados revelam a TCI como um sintoma da tecnocultura, onde crença e ceticismo disputam regimes de verdade por meio de práticas amadoras de cientificação. Argumentamos que esse campo emergente desafia paradigmas da comunicação pública da ciência, demandando novas abordagens epistemológicas.

Palavras-chave: Transcomunicação Instrumental. Tecnocultura. Inteligência Artificial. Disputas Discursivas. Comunicação Digital.

¹ Doctoral student in Public Administration. Instituto Brasileiro de Ensino, Desenvolvimento e Pesquisa (IDP). E-mail: timmmartins@gmail.com Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4661-1950>

² Postdoctorate researcher in Communication. Universidade de São Paulo (USP). E-mail: edwaldo.costa@idp.edu.br Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3416-3815>

RESUMEN

Este artículo examina la Transcomunicación Instrumental (TCI) como fenómeno comunicacional híbrido en la cultura digital brasileña contemporánea. Mediante triangulación metodológica cualitativa, analizamos cómo la TCI, mediada por dispositivos electrónicos e Inteligencia Artificial Generativa (IAG), reconfigura discursos sobre duelo, autoridad religiosa y legitimidad científica en plataformas digitales. Los resultados revelan la TCI como un síntoma de la tecnocultura, donde creencia y escepticismo disputan regímenes de verdad a través de prácticas amateurs de científicación. Argumentamos que este campo emergente desafía paradigmas de la comunicación pública de la ciencia, demandando nuevos enfoques epistemológicos.

Palabras clave: Transcomunicación Instrumental. Tecnocultura. Inteligencia Artificial. Disputas Discursivas. Comunicación Digital.

1 INTRODUCTION

In Brazilian digital culture, a flourishing of practices that fuse technology and spirituality can be observed. In Instrumental Transcommunication (ICT), radios, recorders and, currently, Generative Artificial Intelligence (AGI) algorithms are mobilized to supposedly capture voices and images of extraphysical entities. The phenomenon of ICT is not limited to a marginal curiosity, but expands and tensions the boundaries between science, belief, and technical mediation, especially in digital social networks where scientists and amateurs build legitimacy through rudimentary evidence. In this article, we examine ICT as a hybrid device that illustrates discursive disputes in the public communication of science, based on condensed empirical analysis of broader research.³

The relevance lies in the ability of ICT to re-enchant the digital world, as opposed to Weberian disenchantment, through a rhetoric of scientification. How is it justified, in times of AGI, to resort to electronic noise to hypothetically dialogue with the beyond? This question guides our analysis, anchored in Bourdieu, Foucault and Hall, to map how meanings are negotiated on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram.

2 TECHNOCULTURE AND DIGITAL TRANSCOMMUNICATION

Technoculture, according to Santaella, emerges in the convergence between techniques and social imaginaries, where devices are not neutral, but loaded with symbolic expectations. At TCI, apps such as Spirit Box or Replika exemplify this hybridization: the glitch – a technical artifact – is reinterpreted as a spiritual portal, illustrating the gamification of grief in the post-human era. This dynamic is justified by the crisis of traditional religious authority, which ICT circumvents by invoking pseudoscientific protocols, such as white noise recordings.

Empirically, netnographies in Facebook and Reddit groups reveal practitioners who process audios and videos with AGI to "perfect" transimages, even transforming what appears to be just pareidolia into collective proof. Such a practice, exemplified in lives with millions of views on YouTube, demonstrates how ICT is apparently trivializing the paranormal, aligning itself with the algorithmic logic of recommendation that amplifies beliefs. We reflect here that this mediation may not even prove the beyond, but it certainly reconfigures the human in a network.

³ "INSTRUMENTAL TRANSCOMMUNICATION IN DIGITAL MEDIA: BETWEEN BELIEF AND SKEPTICISM IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE", dissertation (Master's Degree in Communication) – Brazilian Institute of Teaching, Development and Research, 2025, by José Valentim Martins Melo; Coordination: Prof. Dr. Edwaldo Costa.

3 REGIMES OF TRUTH AND DISCURSIVE DISPUTES

Foucault alerts us to regimes of truth as products of power-knowledge disputes, and in ICT a semiotic guerrilla war is observed: "skeptics" label the phenomenon as pareidolia, while "believers" mobilize spectrograms as irrefutable evidence. This tension is exemplified in podcasts such as "Mundo Freak Confidencial", "Relatos do Além #23-Conversando com Fantasmas, com Sonia Rinaldi", available on Spotify, or "Transcomunicação Instrumental, com Luis Hu Rivas", available on YouTube, where phenomenological reports challenge the skepticism of the CSI (Committee for Skeptical Inquiry). The critical reflection lies in the asymmetry: official scientificity ignores the symbolic efficacy of ICT in the management of grief.

Data from a questionnaire applied to 120 participants (triangulated with content analysis of 500 posts on TikTok and Instagram) indicate that 68% perceive AGI as a catalyst for authentic contacts, justifying a discursive performativity that builds community legitimacy. Such a finding reflects post-truth, where the viral supplants the verifiable.

4 METHODOLOGICAL TRIANGULATION AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

We adopted an interdisciplinary qualitative approach, triangulating discourse analysis (Bardin), netnography (Kozinets) and semi-structured questionnaire, with ethical approval via Plataforma Brasil. This sample comprised 120 respondents from online ICT communities and corpus of 2,000 interactions in networks (2024-2025). This strategy ensures robustness, allowing Bourdieusian forces to be mapped in the field of communication.

Results synthesized in a table reveal patterns:

Table 1

Platform	Discursive Predominance	Exemplification	% Scientific Legitimacy
Instagram	Consolation/Grief	IAG filters on photos of deceased loved ones	72%
YouTube	Epistemic Dispute	EVP Videos with Spectral Analysis	65%
TikTok	Spiritual viralization	Challenges of Spirit Box	58%

Source: Authors.

This matrix illustrates hybridization: ICT is not isolated pseudoscience, but a laboratory for digital communication, where algorithms mediate the sacred. [1]

5 IMPLICATIONS FOR DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Hall teaches us that identities are negotiated in representations, and TCI exemplifies this by positioning practitioners as "citizen scientists" against academic elites and religious

authorities. This insurgency is justified by the crisis of symbolic capital in scientific dissemination, where IAG democratizes tools, but intensifies controversies – see illustrated cases of spiritual deepfakes. We reflect that the public communication of science must incorporate these peripheral phenomena to avoid epistemic bubbles. [1]

In the Brazilian sphere, coverage in SBT and TV Globo (1988-2025) partially legitimizes TCI, expanding its Bourdieusian field. In the future, with Virtual Reality (VR) and Brain-Computer Interface (BCI), TCI can evolve into postmortem immersions, demanding ethical policies in Digital Communication.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

ICT, therefore, emerges as a techno-spiritual phenomenon that challenges science/belief dichotomies, revealing Digital Communication as an arena of re-enchantment. His findings – from amateur practices to viral scientific disputes – contribute to studies in technoculture and media epistemology, proposing that AGI does not only simulate images and voices, but reconfigures the human.

Future research could quantify impacts on collective grief.

FINANCING

This research has not received specific funding from public or private agencies. It only had institutional resources made available by the Brazilian Institute of Teaching, Development and Research (IDP).

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Both authors declare that they do not have conflicts of interest that could influence this work. No author has received specific funding for this research, nor does he have financial or personal relationships with parties interested in possible outcomes. [3]

ETHICAL ASPECTS

This investigation was carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines established by Brazilian legislation, including Resolutions of the National Health Council (CNS), in particular Resolution 466/2012 and complementary resolutions such as 510/2016 for Human and Social Sciences, submitting the project to the evaluation of the Research Ethics Committee

(CEP) via Plataforma Brasil, including prior approval of the project by the institutional CEP and by the National Research Ethics Committee (CONEP).

All participants signed a Free and Informed Consent Form (ICF), with a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Qualitative data collected through ethnographic netnography and analysis of interactions in social network groups cannot be publicly disclosed without compromising the privacy and anonymity of the participants, in accordance with ethical research guidelines. The aggregated and anonymized quantitative data of the semi-structured questionnaire will be available upon request to the corresponding author, subject to the signing of a confidentiality agreement. They can be made available by e-mail: timmmartins@gmail.com or jose.martins@economia.df.gov.br.

REFERENCES

Bardin, L. (2016). *Análise de conteúdo* [Content analysis]. Edições 70.

Bourdieu, P. (2007). *A distinção: Crítica social do julgamento* [Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste]. Zouk.

Hall, S. (2003). *A identidade cultural na pós-modernidade* [Cultural identity in postmodernity]. DP&A.

Wiseman, R. (2012). *Paranormalidade: Por que vemos o que não existe* [Paranormality: Why we see what isn't there]. BestSeller.