The internet and postcolonial politics of representation: pacific traversals
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CONCLUSION

In social terms, what has changed are the general conditions of representation and self-representation. Many native Pacific Islanders, like other indigenous peoples, are engaged in reclaiming lands, cultural knowledge and political sovereignty. In doing so they have also engaged in representing themselves, both for themselves and for the general public. This is an activity that was previously monopolised by experts. (Friedman 1998:39)

We as Pacific Islanders are at the verge of a New era, and it is through sites like the Kavabowl that we not only get an insight of what others think, but what our own understanding[s] of the region we live in are. By knowing clearly who we are in the world, we are empowered to stand up to any group with the power to say "We are Pacific Islanders and we have a place in this world no matter how small. (Alopi Sione Latukefu, 23/09/96)"

The two quotes above (one based on the representational politics of seemingly conflicting oral historical accounts of the death of Captain Cook in Hawaii and the other from the very early days of the Pacific Forum online) encapsulate the crosscutting sociocultural, technological, and geostrategic concerns being faced by the South Pacific Islands and their diasporic communities. The political economic and emotional-psychological aspects to these facets of the oppression du présent are aired and re-examined in these internet forums. Protagonists in the ensuing debates are reassured, admonished, and empowered accordingly. What I have been looking at most closely is how these (cyber)spatial practices - online literary genres and speech patterns, the underlying moral economies of rules and behavioural norms and their respective gender-power hierarchies - actually operate in these (cyber)spaces and places.

As I said at the outset, this study has been the tale of two internets; of two visions of the future. Despite the tendency (and ability) of the commercial, neoliberal tale of the internet to hog the limelight, another tale of ordinary and/or 'non-western' internet users and uses, has a formative part to play in how, for whom and by whom (future) ICTs are represented, researched and designed and then put in place. This is borne out by the "combinatoires d'opérations" (de Certeau 1980:10) created by these practitioners and their creative, polyphonic, multicoloured, and resistant practices of everyday life - online and/or offline. At the same time, neoliberal political economic elites and TNC strategists have started to focus on the internet/www since the mid-1990's. Corporate giants like Microsoft have 'discovered' the commercial potential of the internet/www as a mass market(ing) medium and have turned their significant economic and meaning-making resources to moulding the internet/www after their own image. Aided and abetted by the deregulation and market liberalisation zeal (particularly that of the USA) of the OECD countries and an oft-quoted speech given by then vice-President Al Gore at an ITU meeting in 1994 (Gore 1994) this reconstruction of the internet/www as a tool and facilitator of 'global market forces' has been swift.

In conjunction with the visual representational power of advertising during this period as I showed in Chapter One, there have been all manner of strategic manoeuvrings and technical decisions made 'behind the screens', some of which were examined in Chapter Nine. Whilst public Telecom operators were reinventing themselves into 'global service providers', IT companies like Microsoft and Intel, IBM and Macintosh, Oracle and Cisco Systems began to cash in on the popular appeal of the internet/www. These processes were examined from two other angles. The first, was that of the stresses and strains on the analytical and philosophical frameworks with which they are studied (Chapter Two). The second was more technical. Chapter Nine returned to these earlier tensions in terms of how resignation to these undemocratic strategies and their representation of internet systems and interfaces leaves enormous political and economic interests unchallenged. Whence the allusion to the Borg storyline of the Star Trek series. These are not inseparable from questions of internet

\(^2\) Knowledge is Power! Power is Knowledge! initial post, KB, no longer on server.

\(^3\) "combinations of operations"
'governance', equitable Research and Development of ICTs for small economies, issues of 'fair trade' and appropriate technology. Neither is the activity of non-elite uses and/or non-expert users irrelevant to the latest 'digital' divide between haves and have-nots. These daily, and cumulative appropriations of ICTs for financial gain impinge upon the communications needs of small islands countries and disadvantaged communities as well.

There are several conclusions that flow from this situation and the reconstructions of everyday life online presented in Chapters Five to Eight. First; these particular practitioners have been (re)articulating aspects of everyday life for postcolonial Pacific Island diasporas from the inside out (Seth 1999:223, Wilson 1999), the outside in, and from more than a few permutations of in-between. This feature framed the reconstructions of Chapter Five, which dealt with the cross-cutting social pressures of various understandings of sex-gender roles for women in Samoan and Tongan societies; in and of themselves but also when transcribed to Western ones. In the process, the everyday intimacies and intricacies of inter/subjectivity get 'outed' in the (still) open communicative spaces available on these websites. For these women, and men, querying received notions of Samoan/Tongan - and western/European - constructions of femininity and masculinity, all sorts of intimate and public issues are worked at, and worked through. This atmosphere of conviviality and mutual support becomes more fraught, though, when such queries move into the political domain. The reconstructions of Chapter Six showed the contours and nuances of an intense and ongoing debate about the integrity and vitality of Tongan sociocultural hierarchies, political institutions and incumbent elites vis-à-vis (neo)liberal renditions of democratic "good governance" and "Pro-Democracy" challenges to the (male and aristocratic) status quo in Tonga itself. Despite the 'localised' specifics, this political debate throws into relief a host of different assumptions about the similarities and differences between non-western, postcolonial democracies and those of their former colonisers. Neither side gets off lightly in these heated debates, which have also brought these internet groups' leaders in direct confrontation at times with the powers-that-be on the ground 4. Nevertheless, multiplex meanings and experiences of postcolonial everyday life are thrown out for debate in order to challenge presuppositions, and done so from both within and without their respective cultural and historical locations. Chapter Seven showed how these issues get (re)articulated in the context of self/group identity formation and the intra/intercultural tensions of everyday embodiments - of skin colour, racial discrimination and changing sociocultural mores. Here, diasporic, and 'mixed blood' participants unpack the meaning of 'race', the meaning of Fa'a Samoa and anga fakatonga, and the fluidity of their constituent cultural practices. In so doing they articulate the operations of multiplex identifications that include new understandings of being "Polynesian", "American", "New Zealander", "Australian"; of having roots and/or origins in the South Pacific, Utah, Southern California, or suburbs like Carlton, Los Angeles or Ota, Auckland.

Second; the content analysis and hermeneutic schema of Chapters Three and Four showed how this bottom-up, postcolonial internet/www is in the making. This everyday, non-commercial internet/www meshes with, and facilitates a set of processes and cultural productions that belong to a postcolonial politics of (self) representation for younger generations of the South Pacific Islands. These non-commercial online traversals straddle, intersect with, and ultimately challenge the strategic plans and image-making of what I called, in Chapter One, the Global Speak of global capital. They do so by virtue of these non-elite, everyday uses of these technologies and their reliance on the commitment of like-minded people to organise and moderate their online comings and goings and shape these websites. They also do so out of allegiance to multiplex forms of political economic and sociocultural expression, and forms of translocality, which do not preclude a sense of belonging to several places, cultures, nation-states all at once. These practitioners persistently exercise and (re)negotiate their own sense of agency, their own sense of sociocultural and historical change, their own interlacing sense of self and community - together. They use the internet/www enthusiastically, and open up their own (cyber)spaces there by poaching - braconner- from the range of everyday sociocultural practices and behavioural norms presented to them, by virtue of diasporic and

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4 Both Kami and Aiono attest to having been approached and/or put under pressure by their Tongan/Samoan authorities and/or community leaders for some of the views expressed in these forums (Kami 2001: interview, Aiono 1999: interview).
postcolonial living conditions. Using these various reference points, they strive to counter ingrained and oppressive racial stereotypes about Pacific Islanders on the ground. The immediate upshot is that anyone entering these forums without preconceptions of who, or what Polynesians and their problems are, would glean quite a different perspective than those (of us) who have become inured to some of the more disturbing statistics and received (media) versions of contemporary Pacific Island (diasporic) life. This person would also note rules of online comportment that are at once practical and organisational but also soaked with a composite morality - Christian ethics, individual responsibility for one's own destiny and community/extended family obligations. Chapter Eight took a step back from the manifest content of the other chapters to take a look at the practicalities of how these rules and norms, and the moral economies that inform them, are negotiated - by moderators and constituencies - as these groups have waxed and waned.

Third; whilst I have argued that this latter internet/www persists despite the downward pressure and financial squeeze of powerful vested interests, the outcome of these two tales are neither unitary nor foreclosed. They entail contending uses, goals, and technological specifications that are in constant flux, under negotiation, and unevenly distributed. The more powerful and well-heeled practitioners seek to control and steer how the internet/www is seen, designed, and experienced. In turn, they privilege whatever 'market sectors' they may have in mind. As both Chapters Two and Nine have shown, in their own particular ways, there is a need to rethink some of the underlying issues that are at stake. This means generating more public and scholarly debate about the 'technological futures' of ICTs, about their sociocultural and political economic implications. I have shown that no technology stands above and beyond those who design and control it. In that respect, 'we' get the internet 'we' deserve. This is not only a critical social constructivist view of technology vis-à-vis historical and social change, but also a feminist and postcolonial one. All these approaches would focus on the nuances and processes of broader gender-power relations and their institutionalisation vis-à-vis new(er) ICTs. They would aim to examine inner and outer tensions of these everyday tactical and strategic operations, and demystify assumptions about sex/gender, race/ethnicity, and class/status in the process. They would all want to underscore how the tale of non-elite and 'non-western' practices of everyday life online is just as cogent, just as vibrant, and just as crucial to debates about the present and future of ICTs in any 'new world order'. In postcolonial societies and their diasporic communities, the political economic and sociocultural stakes are even higher as these communicative, non-commercial uses show old and new(er) practices of everyday life in transition. Their online/offline intersections indicate that they, too, are in contention for the future look and layout of the internet/www, and their respective sociocultural locations.

This amounts to a situation where there are contending politics of representation at work, contending exchanges of meanings and imagings. These are sites for gender-power struggles for ownership and control of the spaces and rights to speak in cyberspace. These struggles are embedded in lived lives offline and their various political economic and sociocultural specificities.

**Analytical Implications**

There are three main analytical implications to these conclusions. First, is the way the material being produced online and its broader context of sociocultural and political economic changes constitute certain sorts of inter/intracultural gender-power relations. This analytical dyad, following Bordo (1990:152), has posited an understanding of gender that is more than 'adding women and stirring' (Whitworth 1999) or positing a synonym for 'woman' (see Carver.

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3 Classic epithets about many disadvantaged cultural/ethnic minorities apply here; that they are mainly violent gang-members, overstayers/illegals, dole-bludgers, heavy drinkers, physically rather than intellectually endowed, living in poor and over-crowded housing, uninterested in 'getting on', passive and docile.

6 Mostly the much-travelled, male, business executive who still dominates corporate boardrooms. Those of the IT and Telecom industries are no exception here, bearing in mind the different gender demographics between the USA and Europe though (Brain Catt, Regional Marketing Director, Infonet EMEA, personal email, 2/07/01).
Power relations are not practised along monolithic categories like 'Race', 'Sex', 'Class' but through and despite them in a complex and changing set of tensions (Haraway 1992). When reading online texts by fe/male posters (as and when indicated by their signatures and other signs), this dyad also recalls how 'gender' is also "a discursive field; i.e. it is about language, especially writing and other forms of signification ...a field of meanings" (Haraway 1992:289, see Silver 2000, Warschauer 2000). Hence positing gender and power as a relational dyad is to imply multiplex - ethnic/racialised/class- relations as well (Hall 1996a, 1996b, Ling 2001: 145 passim).

This gives rise to the second element, dealt with in Chapter Four, which is both technical and methodological. These online (cyber)spatial practices are characterised by their intertextuality, laterality, multivocality, and fluidity. These are carried through the techniques and facility of hyperlink textual practices and production. In cyberspatial terms, this is what allows for the re-embodiment and reinscription of lived lives in online forms and thereby articulate online-offline relationships, situations, and life stories. The manifest content of the threads, trace quite tangible traversals in cyberspace; as electro-physical comings and goings, and as discursive inter/subjective events, encounters and representations. The specific communicative hierarchies that constitute the online moral economies of these forums and their participants are woven through the content and contours of the discussions. These gender-power relations are as "real as it gets" (Kolk et al 2000: 4). So, whilst I am arguing that these traversals constitute a different sort and scale of the practice of everyday life online from the point of view of non-western and relatively disadvantaged groups, the actual content also deals with offline lived lives. It is not an either-or between real lives and virtual ones but rather, as I argued in Chapter Two, a new cognitive and experiential domain.

In methodological terms, and as I argued in Chapter Four, the online conversations - texts - analysed here and the five years that it took to gather them, do not constitute a full ethnography of an online community on their own. Neither is it an exhaustive reconstruction of the thousands of discussions that have occurred throughout the life of these discussion forums, let alone other interconnected websites. Nor has it plotted a one-to-one cause and effect relationship between the discussions and events occurring beyond or alongside (at best these were alluded to by myself or when made explicit by participants). I argued that the empirical-theoretical import of these sorts of internet/www communications have to be seen in terms of their (online) longevity, substantive and moreover recurrence of politically charged discussion content, the high levels of participation in the thematic categories that emerged over time, and the articulated awareness of wider Pacific Island communities and 'global' issues that permeate these discussions.

More importantly, a key operational indicator for locating and assessing current (and potential) significance in online scenarios is the way in which the internet/www has been by definition, open and accessible to all-comers (this is the sine qua non of world-wide web software whatever its eventual limitations). This ontological element is underscored here by the fact that these particular discussion groups have consciously not restricted access by way of passwords that are linked to financial membership, or other forms of pre-emptive exclusion. Together with the use of relatively few and/or open-ended forms of anonymity these factors combine to show that these interactions are occurring in a nascent electronically mediated 'public space', which under certain material conditions (of access, computer literacy and financial means) can be accessed and entered by anyone from anywhere. This public-ness straddles traditional territorial, sociocultural, political economic - and physical - divides. Its persistence and richness simply underscores the way such multivocality and inclusion on the internet/www is in danger of being squeezed out by neoliberal, undemocratic, political and economic vested interests.

The upshot of these decisions and dynamics of online occupation, so to speak, is that these inter-related websites are solidifying into habitual meeting places and communicative spaces on open (cyber)spaces and places of the world-wide web. Moreover, these online traversals become archival records and traces of everyday life, socialising, relationships, and cultural artefacts in their own right as these participants use the internet/www to create and "present a place as they wish" (Kami 2001: interview). In other words, these online traversals have material as well as discursive substance. Both come in electronic forms and formats, digital and physical architectures, enable on-screen imagings, textual production, hyperlinks and
off-screen movements and digitalised 'footprints'. These can be read, traced and located in various degrees of depth and attention to detail. The content of the on-screen messages in these cases can be opened, digested, seen in relations to those with whom they are interacting, following up. Moreover, the authorship as both identifiable subjects - people - and written standpoints - statements - can be ascertained and located in terms of their own variegated 'textual surfaces', that of others and/or previous interventions in earlier discussions. These internet/www practitioners assume and operate at various levels of intimacy, political awareness and mutual identification, recognition or confrontation. All these exchanges of meaning, political and personal renegotiations, personal accounts of experience and geographic and socio-economic (dis)location are the everyday 'stuff' of life online in and of itself and as it pertains to lives lived offline (see Jordan 1999:143-145). As such these (cyber)spatial textual practices and movements are part and parcel of the 'couture' between online/offline everyday life.

These technical and methodological implications bring me to a final point about how these analytical, interpretative connections were made. Namely; hermeneutically. What this entailed was the making of analytical and substantive connections between ostensibly disparate events and processes, illustrating them by way of concrete instances of ongoing interactions occurring in discussion forums, newsgroups or live chat. The massive volumes of email, live chat interactions constitute as important a part of daily electronic interactions as commercial transactions. This linking up of a bird's-eye research view to a worm's-eye experiential and inter/subjective view was achieved by way of a feminist inspired critical approach that wrote the researcher's subjectivity into the story, whilst aiming to privilege the creators and their texts as much as possible and keep a critical eye on broader gender-power hierarchies. This approach draws from Critical, Feminist and Postcolonial approaches in any of the Social Sciences, their respective nuances and debates notwithstanding. This schema has sought to integrate the interactions between researcher-as-subject and objects-of-research-as-subjects, and acknowledge some of the operations of gender-power relations and knowledge-making where apposite, or necessary.

This study is of particular interest to postcolonial critiques of eurocentric practices of knowledge production because it has been about how postcolonial diasporas and their interlocutors 'back in the islands' have been navigating and negotiating generically western Hi-Tech technologies like the internet/www. In cyberspace they have been able to work and talk through some of the major tensions of living as an ethnic/cultural minority, of having more than one locus for identification, of dealing with the old and the new, of building new(er) forms of community. It is also of interest to postcolonial debates about how to turn these critiques into appropriate political and economic empowerment. For one, this study counters the foreboding tone of many commentaries about the empowerment potential of ICTs. This hermeneutic schema has allowed for the "description and interpretation of [a ] process of appropriation" (Giard & Mayol 1980:17) by internet users who do not fit the well-to-do white (and still mostly male) internet user/PC owner profile of market research and corporate advertising campaigns. Practitioners like Taholo Kami and Al Aiono, and their constituencies, are well-aware of the empowerment potential of ICTs and knowledge-making where apposite, or necessary.

This is not say that everything is 'AOK', however. It is not to imply that the internet/www will rectify the complex issues facing both diasporic communities and Pacific Island societies; that "things go better with Microsoft". But neither is this study prepared to accept the latest rhetoric that "there is no alternative" to neoliberal and corporate representations and designs for future habitation and navigation of the internet/www. Far from it. Nevertheless there are some immanent dangers. As I have indicated in Chapter Nine, Big Business is also able to focus its energies on these grassroots everyday users and appropriate their political agency, if it suits them to do so. In one sense, the South Pacific Islands - like the Caribbean and Africa - are still too 'insignificant' in terms of "market penetration" and population density. The problem, however, is that neoliberal macroeconomic policy-makers in those internet heartlands bordering this ocean can only see 'development' and Research and Development in these free market terms. Political leaders in the Pacific Islands have to contend with this entrenched attitude vis-à-vis structural adjustment programs and conditions that come with foreign aid. The relatively low priority given to suitable development of ICTs, such as long-distance educational facilities, suitably resilient equipment for the salty, damp conditions of the islands, enhanced
internet-based medical and health services, improved radio and satellite links, is still all too evident. It is also a question of political and financial will on the part of the money-lenders. But this is the stuff of another research project. For now, this study hopes to have made the initial opening in terms of other ways in which ICTs can be thought about, designed, and eventually used, by examining the practice of everyday life online and lived lives of those who do not belong to the "World According to Global Capital".

And the theoretical and methodological upshot of this way of analysing and ordering these hectic, numerous and open-ended discussions? Well, the 'big story' of world politics, the arcane technical mysteries of the GII-GIS rematerialise (along with all their problematic gender-power relations) at the intersection of multifarious lived lives, centuries-old physical and social traversals, and the tensions that go with these. Add a postcolonial critical edge to these stories and they include pre/post/neo-colonial mental, emotional histories and geographies, all of which find their expression in these cyberspaces. Abstract causal explanatory and prescriptive models become inhabited, reconfigured, and more precise. Broader and more specific gender-power hierarchies become more delineated and thereby can be potentially addressed. Even as these online interactions are texts, a set of literary genres in themselves with their own aesthetic concerns and "scriptural economies", they also (re)articulate - and so trace - the lives of s/he/they who produced them and their various political economic and sociocultural conditions in relationship to one another.

**Postcolonial Politics of Representation: The Internet in Us?**

This brings me to some final observations on possible internet - and postcolonial - futures in terms of how online and offline everyday communicative practices converge and reconfigure each other in these forums.

The discussions that constitute these websites have evolved not only into spaces for personal expression and mutual support but also challenges to old and new sociocultural and political pressures emanating from both their 'original' and diasporic cultural contexts. They reveal complex crosscutting everyday practices of peoples hailing from small island states in a 'globalising' and 'digital' age in that they also operate as a node for linking the online community with various levels of personal concern for lives offline. Their conversations entail both earnest and light-hearted communication about the intercultural and intracultural gender-power relations of lived lives and how these impinge upon self/group identifications. They do so from the inside out (such as when intimate lives are shared in open cyberspaces) and the outside in (when tensions and misconceptions between at-home and diasporic communities come to the fore). These traversals are, at one and the same time, personal, geographical, sociocultural and political economic movements and exchanges of meaning. They bespeak both personal choice and circumstance, group pressures and group solidarity, broader dynamics of exclusion and isolation, success and achievement.

The substantive contours and nuances of the discussions, the (auto)biographical accounts offered, the intra/intercultural conflicts that are (re)articulated, and the political, philosophical and cultural positions taken as discussion threads unfurl show these participants "engaged in representing themselves, both for themselves and the general public" (Friedman 1998:39, my emphasis). The internet/www - at least the ways in which it is (re)appropriated and used by these practitioners - is the central enabler of these postcolonial (re)presentations. The aforementioned goals are no small task either; the sense of unity and community that is evidenced in the vast majority of these debates (which arise from mutuality in this online context as in any other) is far from being a given. It has to be worked at - practised. The ways in which Tongan and Samoan participants are interacting with each other on the Kava Bowl and/or the Kamehameha Roundtable and the sense of "pan-Poly identity" (Morton, personal email 22/06/01) that has been emerging is not insignificant given

the historical and ongoing rivalries between these two groups. It seems significant that

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7 My thanks to Richard Nickelson (1999; interview), Norman Okamura (1999; interview), Taholo Kami (2001; interview) and HRH Prince Tupouto'a (personal emails) for sharing their different views on where such priorities lie.
they [are] prepared to 'share' the [KR] forum in that way - considering gangs of Tongans and Samoans are literally killing each other in real life. (Morton, personal email, 22/06/01)

In this sense, participants are very well-aware of how these issues and the 'online-ness' of these forums are interwoven. But they are also show an awareness of how these (cyber)spatial practices, and their constituent counter-representations, are not self-explanatory. They do not take the empowering abilities of these (cyber)spaces (to release the protagonists from preordained sex-gender roles and communicative hierarchies, for instance) for granted.

The stresses and strains come from within and without. Some participants would attribute this to misuse and abuse of new(er) communicative possibilities (as illustrated in the discussions in Chapter Eight). Others would put it down to neo-colonial political and economic pressures being brought to bear on the Pacific Islands by the international community, and their proselytising cultural and political values (see Chapters Six and Seven). Others, in turn, would reflect in passing on moves by political and economic vested interests to subdue, standardise and so exploit the still freely available "virtual machinery" that constitutes the internet/www.

I would add that these strategic moves directly impinge upon the rich, polysemous tones of everyday life online as well. 'Becoming Polynesian' entails dealing with all these tensions. In the last analysis, overcoming such rivalries [between Tonga and Samoa] has been necessary for people to gain that sense of being Polynesian. [There is] the appeal, particularly to young people, of a pan-ethnic, i.e. pan-Poly identity. Especially for those who don't feel quite comfortable in their specific group - e.g. are told they are not 'real' Tongans because they don't have the language or anga fakatonga. But of course this process of forming a pan-ethnic identity is also linked to real world necessities, such as having to work together in order to get funding directed to "Pacific Islanders" and more generally to be recognised by a mainstream society that designates them as a pan-ethnic group...... So it is a partially a strategic move to gain access to resources, have problems addressed etc. This then overlaps with younger people's identification as pan-ethnic ... for identity reasons. (Morton. op cit).

These exchanges of meaning, which are also intended to empower, show quite different sorts of articulations of 'globality', 'community', economic well-being, democratic principles, identity tout court, and of the internet/www itself, to those purveyed by corporate business and political economic neoliberal representations of life online / cyberspace.

Far from being scared off by this level of analytical and lived complexity, these forums' protagonists tackle them head on. They do so whilst embracing the opportunities for personal and group empowerment offered by dedicated website moderators (who also double as diasporic/cyber community leaders and role models); moving through the various avenues of access and permissive communicative spaces that open up accordingly. A more recent example from the Kamehameha Roundtable, and one that shows these two groups explicitly in the processes being referred to in the quote above, is an initial post (with 32 follow-ups) in the KR entitled Samoa/Tongan conflict. This poster, who is also revisiting the themes studied in Chapter Eight asks:

Okay, just to entertain my knowledge. I wanted to know something. Many Tongans and Samoans (not all of course) have a hard time seeing eye to eye. I see both races duking it out all the time in the different msg [message] boards ....I see it when we walk down the aisle of a mall and one of my cousins mad dog a group of samoans walking the opposite direction. My question is why? Yeah, I know that it dates back in the old days when Tonga and Samoa were at war, but what really happened? I've heard several

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* Here, a poster/posters on the Kava Bowl called Ghost and/or The Navigator have had a lot to say over the years, particularly in terms of the Tongan government's business ventures in internet-related areas. Incidentally, Ghost is the nickname of a Tongan Space Physics student - Tupuosi Paul Manusiu Loto'anii - who willingly provides a link to his own homepage. This is currently at http://plasma.newcastle.edu.au/spwg/people/pmanusiu/index3.html.
different accounts. I've heard that the Tongans took control over parts of Samoa...I've heard that the chief of Samoa, Malietoa (sp?) killed a Tongan chief. I realize that Tonga and Samoa are both different countries, similar in many aspects can cause a rivalry, but why is that tension still there? What's the point of fighting your own brothers or your own sisters? I've seen over and over again the hatred many of my fellow Tongans have for Samoans. In fact I was one of them at one point. All that changed when I fell in love with a Samoan. I had the chance to see the Samoan culture and how beautiful it is.

Tonga and Samoa are both very unique in their own ways, but that doesn't mean we don't share a common link. We are all Polynesians. (TonganRasta, 6/06/01)⁹

The high number of follow-ups, the historical facts and current events that get exchanged, positions taken and then reconsidered, allowances for those of others, and the constant moving between categorical declaration and quizzicality illustrate the longevity (old and new patrons are there) and the textual richness (perfect spelling and written verbalisations, abbreviations, colloquialisms and so on) of these online forums. It also answers the question; why do these people bother, and for so long? They do so because these internet forums provide translocal open (cyber)spaces in which to discuss issues that matter for them, in their everyday life, whether in the islands or living 'overseas'. These (cyber)spaces and places, and their many offshoots, are populated by living, writing, reading inhabitants who co-create and recreate everyday life off/online, providing it with its own inner dynamic. For many participants these forums are gratifying in that they are not only nodes of emotional and psychological support, liberating and informative, but they are fun as well.

One final observation remains to be made. When considering the actual relationship between these online/offline, inside-out/outside-in, intra/intercultural peregrinations have with the grandiose schemes of global capital (like Microsoft, Cisco Systems, Turner Corporation, Rupert Murdoch Inc.) and their neoliberal allies in positions or power in the OECD, NATO, or the United Nations General Assembly, one thing gets repeatedly overlooked. That is; "Polys" and their Pacific Island counterparts are instigating new meaning-making that necessarily include new(er) ICTs, albeit of the sort that are appropriate for their needs. The implication of these practices for the equitable future possibilities of the internet/www is analogous to Epele Hau'ofa's influential argument about the power of countervailing representations and treatments - of the South Pacific Ocean and the thousands of islands that constitute this sea. He argues that there

is a world of difference between viewing the Pacific as "islands in a far sea" and as "a sea of islands".... [In precolonial days] boundaries were not imaginary lines in the ocean, but rather points of entry that were constantly negotiated and even contested. The sea was open to anyone who could navigate a way through. (Hau'ofa 1994: 152 & 154)

The point Hau'ofa is making relates to longstanding forms of knowledge and networking, navigational expertise and travelling, practices of everyday life and intercultural communications that take place across - and despite - great physical distances.

[M]uch ancient and indigenous expertise constitutes highly effective ways of dealing with systems characterised by openness, indeterminacy, multivariateness and unfathomable complexity ....[It] is in this context that we might rethink the resonance between sea faring and excursions in the electronic ether; sea and cyberspace viewed not as domains to be mastered or rendered transparent, or as frontiers to be pushed back by a linear advance, but as distinct fields of complexity capable of traversal and negotiation by sensitive operators. (Clark 1999: 14).

The 'sensitive operators' of the interlinked, multiply travelled and enthusiastically populated websites of the Pacific Forum and Polynesian Cafe, along with those others that have sprung up

⁹ KR, at http://polycafe.com/kamehameha/kamehameha2000-2/4576.html. As an aside, and a final reminder about the well-developed sense of humour also at work throughout these forums, this poster enters her/his email address as imhungryforhorse@aol.com.
in their wake show how such expertise operates today and everyday (see Helu 1993:293,296). 10

To stretch the navigational references and historical traversals a little further. For Pacific Island online interactions and their practitioners, the internet/www could be likened to the “ocean in us” (Hau’ofa 1998). Like the South Pacific, cyberspace is not an empty ‘frontier’ to be colonised, its inhabitants to be civilised and ‘guided’, its ‘exotic’ women ‘enjoyed’ (Teaiwa 1999, Ling 2001b). Everyday life online is not a priori external to offline lived lives, histories, institutions, and communicative rituals. These are mutually constituted by way of the new(er) sorts of traversals relationships permitted by and through the internet/www. Over time, these (re)create the (un)known horizons of any (postcolonial) society; be it global, online, or otherwise. This impinges directly on the gender-power relations, with all their race/ethnic, class/status complexities, of who is - let alone who should be - deciding where the internet/www can, and does facilitate equitable and empowering communicative (cyber)spaces and places. And for whom. The clarion call of the neoliberal dream is that all such nascent and vibrant public (cyber)spaces and everyday communicative practices necessarily be privatised, standardised and, by extrapolation, flattened out and subdued. Moreover, it equates the latter processes (and the global, so-called free market that purportedly justifies this) to ‘democracy’ tout court. I would say that is not the case at all, either in principle or in practice. The postcolonial politics of representation at stake in these new(er) communicative spaces and places of cyberspace recall the Hau’ofa’s ongoing challenge to (postcolonial) Pacific peoples.

We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as out sole appointed places, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom. (Hau’ofa 1994:160).

Whether or not one agrees with this analogy, the conclusions drawn from this research, or even cares about the future of the internet/www, these online practices of everyday life do underscore one thing. The public-private-personal nooks and crannies of the (cyber)spatial traversals and inter/subjectivities that constitute the practice of everyday life on and through the internet/www, in all their multicultural manifestations, are not the private domain or property of any one interest. Least of all global capital.

---

### Appendix One: Country Figures at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pop 1</th>
<th>GDP per capita ($US)</th>
<th>Net Migration Rate (migrants / 1000 2)</th>
<th>Tele-Density 3</th>
<th>Satellite &amp; Cable Links</th>
<th>Internet Users (% of pop) 4</th>
<th>Total Internet Hosts (approx) 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Samoa</strong></td>
<td>179,466</td>
<td>1,255 (1999)</td>
<td>-11.59</td>
<td>4.87%</td>
<td>&lt;5&gt;</td>
<td>0.3% (1999)</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Samoa</strong></td>
<td>65,446</td>
<td>2,600 (1995)</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>22% 9</td>
<td>&lt;5&gt;</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tonga</strong></td>
<td>102,321 10</td>
<td>1,589 (1999)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>&lt;5&gt;</td>
<td>1.0% (1999)</td>
<td>5,529 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiji</strong></td>
<td>832,494</td>
<td>2,002 (1999)</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
<td>9.76%</td>
<td>&lt;8&gt;</td>
<td>0.9% (1999)</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Zealand</strong></td>
<td>3,819,762</td>
<td>17,400 (1999)</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>&lt;7&gt;</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>343,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td>19,169,083</td>
<td>22,200 (1999)</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>&lt;8&gt;</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1,616,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA</strong></td>
<td>275,562,673</td>
<td>33,900 (1999)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>103%</td>
<td>&lt;94&gt; 12</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8,069,568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


2 An important element to the diverse demographics in this region is the relatively slow population growth that "is not the result of low fertility but, rather, reflects massive emigration to New Zealand, Australia and the United States." (UNDP 1999:2-3). The UNDP reports that "ten of the fifteen Pacific Island countries have had net population losses in recent years..., ranging up to -3.5% per year" (UNDP 1999:3). The figures here for Western Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga bear this out.


4 It is important to note that the term 'user' has to be taken with some circumspection for several reasons. First because "there is no standard definition of frequency (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly) or services used (e.g., e-mail, World Wide Web). [Second because although] there are several well-known sources of Internet users for different countries, they are often collected from various national surveys that are not comparable and typically ignore developing countries completely" (Minges, 2000).

5 This also applies to defining hosts (Minges 2000). One definition is that a host "is a domain name that has an IP address (A) record associated with it. This would be any computer system connected to the Internet (via full or part-time, direct or dialup connections). i.e. nw.com, www.nw.com." (Internet Software Consortium at http://www.isc.org/ds/defs.html). In short, the number of computers that are connected to the internet. This does not always correlate with the total users least of all in the South Pacific Islands where one host can serve many users. This is
very apparent in Tonga's main public access point, the Royal School of Science. Neither are all hosts and/or web servers associated with their designated country, Tonga being a publicised case in point where many are based in the USA (Wired Magazine 1999). The difference between host and web servers is related to that between the internet and the world-wide web (see Barrons 1995). On the Samoan Sensation website (based in the UK) a survey was recently done (June 2001) to see how many web servers are currently situated in Samoa itself. The total was 71 (http://www.samoan.co.uk/samoan-servers.html). See http://tongaonline.com/ for an umbrella website (designed and run by Taholo Kami as well) with a wide range of links and Tongan web servers.

Here, Tonga stands out vis-à-vis the other Pacific Islands. This has a lot to do with the proactive stance taken by the Tongan government (the Royal Family in particular) towards satellite connections and the internet/www (Wired 1998). The stories around the former (the business venture called Tongasat) and the latter (the Tonic Corporation that sells the .to internet domain name) intersect with political issues in the Kingdom (see Chapter 6) and the complex nature of what constitutes 'public' or 'private' ownership and control in post-colonial societies (see Chapter Five). A number of discussion threads deal with these issues. See the thread entitled Tongasat, Royal Family and Corruption are one!!!! (Ghost, 2/03/99, initial post, at http://pacificforum.com/kavabowl/kc/messages/10004.html) with nearly 50 follow-ups.

Western Samoa comes under the UN category of Least Developed Countries. The ITU estimates this to be 0.56% in 2000. The South Pacific Forum Secretariat (1998) put total PC ownership (government and private) at 1200 in 1997 whence this figure.

See Millar (2000) for a 1998 figure. American Samoa, like Hawaii, is often absorbed into figures for the USA.

A lower figure, 97,000, is given by The [British] Commonwealth, List of Members (2001) at http://www.thecommonwealth.org/htm/commonwealth/about/members/memberlist/pacific.htm. A higher one, 105,000, is from SIDSnet figures (2001) at http://www.sidsnet.org/. The CIA World Fact Book puts the population somewhere between that. Nearly 42% of the population is under 16 years of age. For the record, the figures for how many Tongans are resident in the USA vary from 16000 to 46000. The latter count includes that most difficult category of all; 'illegals'. A short thread on the KR entitled how many tongans are in the us? (hingano, 5/07/01, at http://polycafe.com/kamehameha/kamehameha2000-2/5118.html) gives rise to these estimates. The 1990 US census counted 365,024 'Pacific Islanders'. See http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0779063.html for the figures.

The ITU has no figure for 2000. The South Pacific Forum Secretariat (1998) put the total PC ownership (government and private) at 1500 in 1997 hence this figure is an approximation.

By this I mean to say that, as in ancient Rome, nearly all ICT roads lead to or through the USA. According to the CIA factbook figures for 2000, 16/61 satellite earth stations are in the Pacific Ocean alone. Out of the world's Top Ten Internet Service Providers, eight are based in the USA, as are four out of the Top Ten Telecom Operators (see Chapter 1). Any map of world telecom traffic, satellite and cable connections will show this quite graphically (ITU 2001, Siemens 2001). See also the South Pacific Forum (1998:25) and http://www.telegeography.com/Publications/tmap00.html for various sorts of visualisations of these comings and goings. Ward (1999) relates these spatial traversals to historical representations of the Polynesian Pacific Islands (as mental map, cultural category and imagined community) and their diasporas very well.
Appendix Two: Reading and Navigating Discussion Threads

On the following pages, I have reproduced the initial post and follow-ups of a thread from the Kamehameha Roundtable (12/03/01). A key to navigating and reading these threads follows. This discussion, entitled Any Future US Political Clout for PTs [Pacific Islanders]?, basically concerns the whys and wherefores of political representation for Pacific Islanders in the USA (an 'ethnic minority' that has only just been acknowledged in the census). Both American-based Samoans and Tongans get involved (see also Chapter 6). This thread is a good example for several reasons.

First, because it is long enough, with 67 follow-ups and 12 participants, enough to show how discussion threads develop and 'travel' online. This happens in both a digital and a visual sense as people post responses either to the initial post or within these follow-ups respectively. By 'clean', I am referring to the absence of flaming or 'silliness' (see Chapter 7) and the consistent way in which the message headings and the signatures (of each poster/participant) work throughout the thread. This leads to the second reason. It shows the way sub-threads develop in terms of both content and (cyber)spatial operations. The latter is the way in which they spatially traverse the screen (horizontally) and the various levels traversed by longer threads (the 'cyberspatial depth' of a thread in electronic terms). Content-wise, just reading the title lines of the sub-threads alone also show the various positions taken and relationships between participants (see Morton 1998). Finally, this thread has several familiar and long-serving faces from both the KR and the KB participating in the discussion (such as Meilakepa/Kepa, Bevo, Ani, Teuila) all of whom have been met in Chapters 5-8. The discussion also relates directly to issues concerning these people on-the-ground, such as socioeconomic exclusion for minority groups in the USA and self/group identifications vis-à-vis national affiliations (see Chapter Seven). Where Bevo and Meilakepa take different positions, for example. The thread also includes notice of a meeting held by the Pacific Islander Community Council in the Los Angeles suburbs "to discuss an affordable housing development here in Carson" (Sinafea, 16/03/01) and so it operates as community information networking as well. Although the initial post begins with issues of political representation, halfway through the thread this shifts into how educational opportunities (or lack thereof) contribute to dis/empowerment (see Chapter Five).

The main thing to note, for those unfamiliar with these sorts of online formats, is that all the underlined sections indicate hyperlinks. Laterality is the operational principle even whilst this 'representation' (as it appears at the user interface, on-screen) is ostensibly a linear one (see Chapter 4). Entry and exit can occur at all hyperlinks. Sequences develop as, and where one 'clicks'. The relationship between horizontal and transversal (cyber)spatial practices is multidirectional and multilateral.

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1 By this I mean, what one sees after clicking on the title line from its place on the KR 'front page' (see http://polycafe.com/kamehameha/kamehameha.htm). The specific URL for this thread is: http://polycafe.com/kamehameha/kamehameha2000-2/3190.html

2 See Appendix (CHART) for more on this correlation. In this case, the 12 participants average about 5 interventions each hence it is a relatively concentrated discussion.

3 Economic Development Mig....in reply to This New Blood Lives Five Blocks From Carson City Hall!!! (JC, 15/03/01) at http://polycafe.com/kamehameha/kamehameha2000-2/3243.html
Hispanics have now surpassed Blacks in population and will be major minority political bloc. Blacks have Jesse Jackson, NAACP, Congressional Black Caucus, in long list of advocate groups. Chinese-American just bought San Francisco Examiner due to clout in that city. In comparison, Pacific-Islanders have a few non-profit groups promoting film/arts, and low-income services (majority). Some problems as I see it:

1) lack of leadership
2) lack of coordination/cooperation
3) lack of sense of "belonging" to fabric of American society.

Questions:
1) Should this be a vision/goal for citizens of Pacific Island ancestry?
2) If yes, how to accomplish?

Does anyone have data on population numbers?

Follow Ups:

- **PI Advocacy Dr. Victor C. Thompson** 01:03:01 03/14/01 (5)
  - **Question?** JC 07:30:47 03/14/01 (4)
    - **Answer Sinafea** 04:18:11 03/15/01 (3)
      - **This New Blood Lives Five Blocks From Carson City Hall!!!** JC 10:00:59 03/15/01 (2)
      - **Economic Development Mtg.** sinea23:38:22 03/16/01 (1)
    - **Sorry, its Wednesday Not Tuesday** Sinafea 23:22:52 03/19/01 (0)
- **I disagree** Bevo 16:39:51 03/13/01 (60)
  - **And I'm puzzled why Mr. Unique Individual frequents a poly forum** eb 13:30:01 03/17/01 (11)
    - **What is good for the goose, is good for the gander** Bevo 03:14:25 03/18/01 (10)
      - **we don't need leadership despite our shortcomings?** Meilakepa 18:32:01 03/18/01 (8)
      - **re: Pacific Island immigration an Island ESL programs.** seiOriana 03:23:53 03/19/01 (0)
      - **Re: ESL?** Daniel Longstaff 12:43:37 03/19/01 (5)
      - **Daniel, I agree with you 100%. There's another word for this program and it's called "Belittlement Classes".** A1i 21:38:08 03/28/01 (1)
      - **Wow! Who did that??????????????** Teuila 00:01:03 03/29/01 (0)
      - **Addressing your questions** Teuila 21:56:58 03/19/01 (0)
      - **re: re: ESL?** seiOriana 15:46:33 03/19/01 (1)
      - **ESL programs** Teuila 22:01:10 03/19/01 (0)
        - **ESL Identification** Teuila 08:41:39 03/19/01 (0)
        - **Right On Bevo!!!** JC 07:16:21 03/18/01 (0)
  - **I disagree with your disagreement...** Meilakepa 12:37:09 03/17/01 (12)
    - **Amen** Sinafea 01:16:05 03/20/01 (0)
    - **This is indeed where we differ my friend.** Bevo 03:32:06 03/18/01 (3)
      - **Here I go...** SoulAlone 16:40:43 03/18/01 (0)
      - **a fundamental difference it is...** Meilakepa 04:53:08 03/18/01 (1)
      - **Political clout doesn't equal...** Bevo 14:48:37 03/19/01 (0)
    - **Wow... what an interesting exchange of thoughts...** SoulAlone 00:04:50 03/18/01 (2)
      - **Always makes you think!** Teuila 11:43:28 03/18/01 (1)
      - **I am in total agreement with you...** SoulAlone 15:07:19 03/18/01 (0)
    - **Just looking at those schools......** Teuila 22:57:36 03/17/01 (3)
      - **Right on sis** Bevo 03:39:01 03/18/01 (2)
      - **Look smartypants...** Teuila 09:20:10 03/18/01 (1)
      - **And all around me the power's going out!** Teuila 22:02:47 03/19/01 (0)
  - **Agreed-I am not a hyphenated American.** (at) Dot 10:05:48 03/14/01 (0)
  - **Quite the Contrary....** Sinafea 02:06:51 03/14/01 (33)
    - **There's a difference...** Bevo 15:01:52 03/14/01 (32)
You Are Right in one sense, however.... Sinafea 04:05:11 03/15/01 (31)

Yes its the Parents that are Vocal.... Sinafea 23:50:35 03/16/01 (0)

Don't Forget The Language Issue!!! JC 02:49:48 03/16/01 (19)

ESL, right up my alley! Teuila 09:02:20 03/16/01 (1)

huh? Teuila 09:24:03 03/16/01 (0)

re: ESL, seiOriana 04:45:18 03/16/01 (16)

Be Careful Of the Statistics!!! JC 09:17:05 03/16/01 (11)

The growing number of Samoans inmates isn't exaggerated either! SeiOriana 11:46:29 03/16/01 (10)

O.K. Will you do me a favor! JC 21:08:08 03/17/01 (4)

Oh, come on JC! Teuila 22:37:41 03/17/01 (3)

No I Don't! JC 05:57:32 03/18/01 (2)

I think you missed my point..... Teuila 08:57:32 03/18/01 (1)

Teu, thanks but I feel like JC is trying to act like one of my professors. SeiOriana 14:38:36 03/18/01 (0)

O.K. Will you do me a favor! JC 21:07:51 03/17/01 (4)

Do yourself a favor... seiOriana 01:48:31 03/18/01 (3)

Guess she did have some numbers! Teuila 08:59:07 03/18/01 (0)

10% of the 68% of minority inmates nationwide?????? JC 06:07:48 03/18/01 (1)

Do you research and then come back and correct me...k. SeiOriana 14:24:19 03/18/01 (0)

Be Careful Of the Statistics!!! JC 09:17:04 03/16/01 (1)

The growing numbers of Samoan inmates aren't exaggerated either! SeiOriana 15:35:18 03/16/01 (0)

Yup! Teuila 09:05:11 03/16/01 (1)

yup...yuppy! SeiOriana 12:57:48 03/16/01 (0)

Consider this.... seiOriana 22:08:04 03/15/01 (3)

How Can You Teach What You Don't Know Sinafea 01:37:54 03/20/01 (2)

It's called Common Sense! seiOriana 03:19:37 03/20/01 (1)

You are already a Role Model Sinafea 18:58:23 03/20/01 (0)

Consider the many variables when you make a judgement call! JC 20:16:49 03/15/01

You have fallen into the trap Sinafea. Bevo 16:25:22 03/15/01 (3)

E fa l ata, ae ete ooo i le faali!!? Sinafea 01:07:05 03/20/01 (2)

I heard that one too Bevo 03:05:58 03/20/01 (1)

Youth Rally...I finally heard a "rap" that I understood all the lyrics..... Sinafea 19:33:30 03/20/01 (0)
Note | Comments
--- | ---
1 | This is the subject/title of the message (see note 8) entered by the poster. This will appear as a hyperlink on the KR Front Page. After a certain amount of time, the follow-ups are collapsed and indicated as a total at the end of the subject line of the initial post. Recently italics have been added to differentiate archived initial posts from those more recently posted on the forum. Signature, date and time are given after every subject/title line. The figure in brackets is the number of follow-ups to this particular post/follow-up (5 in total here). The body of the message follows which is entered in the 'comments' box (see note 8).

2 * | This is the link back to the Polycafe/KR Front Page where all initial posts and follow-ups are listed.

3 | The name as given by poster which is linked to the email given. Neither need be 'real' (see Chapter Eight). The bogus emails often contain sub-textual jokes and references in themselves. People often make contact 'offline' in this manner. This name can also be a subject line in itself; against ground-rules but tolerated (see Chapter 7).

4 | Remembering that the sequence on-screen is last post-first, this bullet indicates a direct follow-up to the initial post. Each subject/title line is a separate message that has to be clicked open to be read and so has its own URL. These days in the KR, these have to be opened in a 'new window' in order to enable archiving. Al Aiono sees this as the user's prerogative rather than the site administrators' (Aiono, 1999: interview). When there is no text in the body of the message, 'n/t' usually appears in the title.

5 | This bullet is the first level of a sub-thread, posted in response to the follow-up to the initial post (see note 4). At this point dates/sequence reverts to the more familiar first post-first. Earliest and latest dates of posts have to be ascertained between the last direct follow-up and its sub-thread. In this case the whole discussion took place between 12 - 19 March. The second follow-up to the initial post (Bevo, 13/03/01) had 60 follow-ups; the rest of the thread basically.

6 | And the sub-threads begin to wend their way across the page accordingly, posted in response to the message posted diagonally above it. This is where dialogues, disputes and more intimate interactions usually occur. Sub-threads can also diverge markedly from the original topic. As the eye gets accustomed to this sort of scanning, the general shape of the content is usually clear from the line of follow-ups posted to the initial post (see note 1). Sub-threads/sub-texts can be dealt with separately, in due course.

7 | The 'RE:' appears automatically in the subject line when posting a follow-up (see note 8). As can be seen, most people change this to add their own flavour. Not always though.

8 | This is where follow-ups can be posted. Over the years both Kami and Aiono have refined the software to allow for self-correction and also put filters in place to circumvent 'profanities' - in English but more so in Samoan or Tongan (not always apparent to others).

9 | The Copyright/Trademark. Both of these website founders know the power of copyrighting and the emergent legal issues surrounding online ownership and third party liability in defamation issues (see Chapter Eight).
## Appendix Three: Breakdown of Data Pool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TOTAL INITIAL POSTS</th>
<th>TOTAL FOLLOW-UPS</th>
<th>TOTAL POSTS (Initial Post + Follow-Up)</th>
<th>AVERAGE FOLLOW-UP PER INITIAL POST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>22.7</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>685</td>
<td>713</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2071</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KB Weekly Discussion Topics</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>1152</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>6027</td>
<td>6241</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This Chart shows the positive correlation between the total number of follow-ups to any initial post and the number of actual participants (or posters, as indicated by the number of distinct signatures). As can be seen, in most instances the two are almost identical although total follow-ups will always exceed total participants. It is a two month sample of selected initial posts taken between December 15 1997 and 2 June 1998 from Kava Bowl Kava Chat forum. The key thing to notice is that the two online 'identity indicators' mirror each other. In other words, a high level of follow-ups also means a high number of participants, multiple signatures (where one poster may use 2 or more during the course of a thread) notwithstanding. Of course, these figures have a certain elasticity and in some of the longer threads (see the peaks) posters may intervene on multiple occasions, whence the gaps between follow-ups and discernable participants. Nevertheless, participation figures, if collected over time, show that longer discussion threads in online forums such as these are not simply the province of one or two 'fanatics' indulging in an online bilateral dialogue. The longest threads entail high levels of interest anyway but also a high number of participants.

4 These were taken from the basic statistics contained in the, then, "KB Archives' sub-site. This online back-cataloguing had stopped by 1999 in order to save space on limited server space (Kami interview, 2001). A comparable source is still available on the Kamehameha Roundtable front page where initial posts are archived with the number of follow-ups indicated. This archiving only lasts until Al and Sue Aiono decide to clear the backlog, at which point older threads go offline (Aiono interview, 1999 and see Appendix....). Ascertaininng the number of distinct signatures within the total follow-ups entailed hand-counting (see Chapter 4). This was the only 'secure' way of ascertaining this distinction. Software filters have yet to be developed for this sort of finely tuned screening.