

# Crucial Times



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by Pedro Meyer

We are being confronted by a barrage of information these days that require we heighten our awareness of what it is that we are being fed, be these texts or pictures. One has to ask oneself, who is presenting the information? What are their motivations? How can I be sure that the information is correct? Etc.

As we all have discussed at great length on and off, about the implications of digital alteration in photographs, we have insisted all along that such transformations are not the only way information can be manipulated. We are obviously not saying something new, however what is possibly new in all of this is the Internet as a means of distributing such information and questioning it. I have seen a barrage of conflicting data during these days that I am sure I am not the only one who has received them. Not only over the TV networks but over the Internet as well as in newspapers and magazines.

To receive such a diversified source of information is great and a very positive trend, provided we are also alert to what it is that we are reading (yes, you can also read a photograph). I have received over the Internet some letters that allegedly were sent by the person who signed them, copies were made from these and circulated widely, only to discover later that they were false, the original sender had never done so.

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From Márcio A. V. Carvalho [State University of Campinas - Brazil] we have been getting information that the images that were aired by CNN were images SHOT BACK IN 1991!!! Those are images of Palestinians celebrating the invasion of Kuwait! . CNN has not responded to our request for clarification, so we do not know who has been telling the truth. In either way, the Internet has empowered us to find out of such alleged transgressions in real time.

One child told his father that 300 buildings had been shot down by 300 planes, after having seen as many repetitions of the same scene on that fatal Tuesday but not having yet the tools with which to decode such repetition. By such unending reiteration other forms of consciousness are brought to bear, which brings up the question of the motivation in such replications.

And last but not least, when CNN comes out with a shining new logo for a NEW WAR while the smoke is still coming out of the World Trade Center and The Pentagon, are they really reporting the news or making them? Did they pick up where William Randolph Hearst left off? Are they trying to make up for the lost advertising revenue due to the recession by fueling the sentiments towards a NEW WAR, just like the old press barons did yesterday? CNN could follow the example of another network, CNBC, whose logo is just "America on ALERT".

Be that as it may, this time around we have the Internet, and each other to share and discuss the news aside from the official sources. Let us be vigilant and critical of all that we hear and see. Our older children could really benefit from having such discussions going on in their midst

Maybe in addition to all the flag waving that is going on, we should become magicians. You know the old trick of pulling out doves from where none can apparently be found. Who knows, instead of a NEW WAR, we could find something a bit more constructive. Wisdom to deal with destruction might not be such a bad idea. At least this one has not really been much discussed.

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