



PLENARINHO: NEW PARADIGMS FOR NEW GENERATIONS

Ana Marusia Pinheiro Lima*

Abstract: *Plenarinho* is the program of Brazilian Chamber of Deputies for children. This paper documents its history and the reflection process about its purpose. It analyzes what *Plenarinho* offers in its portal on the internet, through the dimensions of technology, communication, education, and politics. After this, it evaluates the bill propositions sent to the contest “Câmara Mirim,” observing the political literacy of children, according to Crick’s requirements (1998). The methodology consists of documentary research and content analysis. The results show the evolution of a program that is a reference in Brasil and the world, as well as the challenges it still needs to face to keep going, which are relevant for both literature and similar initiatives.

Keywords: *Plenarinho*; Brazilian Chamber of Deputies; Political literacy; Internet; Children.

1. Introduction

The object of this research is Plenarinho (“Little Plenary”, in free translation), a relationship program of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil with the young people. The program is anchored on the Internet portal (www.plenarinho.leg.br) and includes face-to-face actions, as well as the production and distribution of printed material.

This paper has three parts. The first one examines the portal of Plenarinho on the Internet, observing what it offers in four dimensions: the technological, the communicational, the educational and the political ones. It is understood that the first three dimensions are necessary requirements for achieving the fourth one - which is the purpose of the program.

Since 2013, Plenarinho has been in a process of reformulating those four dimensions, starting with the reflection on the information architecture, the production routines, until it embraces the very paradigms on which Plenarinho was based. The new precepts lean towards greater engagement of children in political participation.

The second stage assesses the bills registered in the “Camara Mirim” (“Chamber for Kids”, in free translation), specifically the 2013 edition, as children's feedback from

* Doctoral Candidate in Political Science, M. A. in Communication (2003), Graduated in Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Brasília (1995). Graduated in Social Communication at the University Center of Brasília (1993). Legislative Analyst of the Chamber of Deputies. Researcher of the Postgraduate Programs of the Political Science at UnB (Resocie) and the Center of Education, Training, and Improvement (anamarusia@hotmail.com).

the proposed participation. It is an action for which children debate bills of their own, in a simulation of the legislative activity. The analysis aims to extract elements that demonstrate whether the objectives of Plenarinho and the political literacy of the participants were achieved, according to the requirements proposed by Crick (1998).

In each of the four dimensions, a comparison is made between the initial and current characteristics of the program, with their positive and negative points. In addition, the paper presents suggestions for the improvement of Plenarinho, given the changes of context and of its own paradigms.

Finally, the article exposes the challenges that the program faces, with what it needs to continue developing or even existing.

The methodology consists of bibliographical and documentarary research and content analysis. Data are compiled from Google Analytics and Plenarinho reports. The criteria proposed by several authors (STOCKDALE; BOROVIČKA, 2006; SILVA, 2009; O'REILLY, 2005; PINHO, 1990; SANTOS, 2012; ACKERMANN *et al.*, 2003) characterize an interdisciplinary and specifically empirical methodological approach for the first three dimensions. The political dimension, the most important one and distinctive of Plenarinho, counts on the support of the literature on political literacy.

Plenarinho is a rich object of research. Launched in 2004, it continues to be active and in a continuous process of transformation. It combines a robust digital interface with face-to-face actions with children, being a reference in Brazil and in the world (A HANDBOOK..., 2011). The reproduction of this path and the detailing of the analysis, discriminating current resources and proposals for the new platform, are interesting for future work, both in the implementation of initiatives with similar objectives to Plenarinho and for studies of this type of action.

It is not within the scope of this paper to deepen the analysis in each of the four dimensions. First, due to the limitation of space. Secondly, because the intention is to offer a historical and conceptual overview of Plenarinho, which can serve as a starting point for managers in legislative houses, educators, and researchers.

The way in which this work was structured is its first finding. Plenarinho has already been the object of other researches on its technological (SILVA, 2009), communicational (COSTA, MELO, 2010), educational (MONTEIRO, 2015), and political (MELO, 2008; MARTINS, 2012) dimensions. None of them, however, established bridges to political literacy, and this is one of the contributions of this paper.

2. Political Literacy

According to Crick (1998, p. 13), political literacy is learning about and how people can make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values. For him, public life encompasses, among others,

realistic knowledge, preparation for conflict resolution and decision-making related to the main economic and social problems of the day, including individual's expectations and preparations for the work of employment, and discussion of the allocation of public resources and the rationale of taxation. (CRICK, 1998, p. 13).

Cosson (2008) complements, emphasizing the urgency of thinking about the social transformations of the last decades, which led to the questioning of the powers and limits of the State and of the very notion of citizenship, previously linked to national identification and obedience to collective rules. Among the transformations, he cites the impact of the globalization of economies and cultures, the process of excluding part of the population from social benefits, the fragmentation and the ascendancy of new identities. This ascendancy is notoriously important when it comes to the new generations.

Following this line of thought, Crick (1998) presents the essential elements that must be achieved in political literacy. The author emphasizes the importance of covering all elements, but not necessarily all at once.

Table 1 - Elements of political literacy¹

Key Concepts	Values and dispositions	Skills and attitudes	Knowledge and understanding
Democracy and autocracy	A concern to the common good	Ability to consider and appreciate the experience and perspective of others	The nature of democratic communities
	Willingness to be open to changing one's opinions and attitudes in the light of discussion and evidence		Parliaments at local, national, continental and international levels
	Commitment to active citizenship		Topical and contemporary issues and events at local, national, continental and international levels
Cooperation and conflict	A disposition to work with and for others with sympathetic understanding	Ability to co-operate and work effectively with others	The nature of social, moral and political challenges faced by individuals and communities
	A concern to resolve conflicts		

¹ It should be said that this arrangement of elements is not found in Crick's original table. They were rearranged and aligned by the key concepts in Table 1. Some items in the right column (knowledge and understanding) can span more than one concept or relate to more than one value or skill.

Equality and diversity	Belief in human dignity and equality	Ability to tolerate other viewpoints	The nature of diversity, dissent and social conflict
	Practice of tolerance		
	Commitment to equal opportunities and gender equality		
Fairness, Justice, the Rule of Law, Rules, Law and Human Rights	Civility and respect for the rule of law	Ability to develop a problem-solving approach	Human rights charters and issues
	Judging and acting by a moral code		Legal and moral rights and responsibilities of individuals and communities
	A determination to act justly		
Freedom and Order	Individual initiative and effort	A critical approach to evidence put before one and ability to look for fresh evidence	The rights and responsibilities of citizens as consumers, employees, employers, and family and community members

Key Concepts	Values and dispositions	Skills and attitudes	Knowledge and understanding
Individual and community	Commitment to voluntary service	Ability to use modern media and technology critically to gather information	The interdependence of individuals and local and voluntary communities
			The nature of political and voluntary actions in communities
Power and Authority	Courage to defend a point of view	Ability to make a reasoned argument both verbally and in writing	The economic system and it relates to individuals and communities
		Ability to recognize forms of manipulation and persuasion	
Rights and Responsibilities	A proclivity to act responsibly: that is care for others and oneself; premeditation and calculation about the effect actions are likely to have on others; and acceptance of responsibility for unforeseen or unfortunate consequences	Ability to identify, respond to and influence social, moral and political challenges and situations	Sustainable development and environmental issues
	Concern for the environment		

Source: Crick (1998, p. 44), with adaptations.

Crick (1988) points out the need to stimulate the development and practical application of concepts, values, and skills. Thus, it is possible to develop the practice before formal knowledge, reversing the usual mechanism of some educational processes with children. The assessment of political literacy can also start from what is obtained in

practice to infer implicit knowledge.

According to Fox (2012, p. 15), interpreting the world is not enough; students must understand that they can change it. Without the transition between knowledge and practice, that is, the correspondence between what is transmitted and the conditions that children find in their lives, there is a risk that “political fervor” ends up “at the bottom of backpacks, forgotten like the last week’s homework.”

Lockyer (2008) draws attention to the combination of republicanism (balance of rights and duties) and liberalism (incentive to autonomy and focus on individual rights) in the Crick’s Report. Audigier (2000, *apud* COSSON, 2008) also identifies a more individualistic character in the recent conception of citizenship. Arhtur and Davison (2000) have a different understanding, and they recommend that the social dimension be increased in Crick’s political literacy so that education for citizenship can be achieved.

The literature demonstrates an interest in the effectuation and effectiveness of political literacy, that is, in the successful application of theory. Therefore, the study of a practical initiative, long enough to permit the longitudinal analysis of the right aspects and difficulties encountered in the course, adds valuable insights for both researchers and managers. This is what this work intends, which has Plenarinho as its object of study.

3. Plenarinho Program

Plenarinho is a program of relationship of the Chamber of Deputies with the community, of an educational nature², focused on the universe of childhood: children from 7 to 14 years old, parents and teachers. The program is anchored on the Internet portal (www.plenarinho.leg.br) and includes the actions Camara Mirim (“Chamber for Kids”), Eleitor Mirim (“Young Voter”), and Escola na Camara (“School at the Chamber”), as well as the production and distribution of printed material. Its slogan is: “The childlike way of being a citizen”.

According to information on the “Who We Are”³ page, Plenarinho portal informs about the Legislative Branch - drafting of laws and parliamentary action -, politics, democracy, and State organization. Social and educational issues related to children’s daily lives are also addressed, such as health, ecology, education, leisure, and others.

Camara Mirim is held annually. Children debate bills of their own, in a simulation

² Other educational programs and actions of the Chamber of Deputies: Parlamento Jovem (Youth Parliament), Estágio Cidadão, Estágio Visita, Estágio Participação (Internships), Escola na Camara, Pró-Adolescente, EcoCamara, Hacker Lab, Missão Pedagógica, Oficina de Atuação no Parlamento (workshops), Distance Education, Postgraduate Program.

³ <http://www.plenarinho.gov.br/plenarinho/ememomos>

of the legislative activity. In the case of Eleitor Mirim, every two years, teachers and students participate in the election of fictional candidates, from the campaign to the voting in a virtual electronic ballot box. Escola na Camara is a partnership with the Education Department of Federal District. Plenarinho team visits schools and receives a visit from students and teachers, in the National Congress Palace.

Plenarinho produces and distributes Revista do Plenarinho (“Plenarinho Magazine”), with comics and hobbies; primers; special booklets for art exhibitions in the Chamber; Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente - ECA (The Child and Adolescent Statute) in comic strips; and specific printed materials for special dates or participation in fairs.

3.1. Brief History of Plenarinho

2002 - The project “www.plenarinho.gov.br: not only a website, an instrument at the service of citizenship”, elaborated by civil servants of the Chamber of Deputies⁴, wins the internal contest Camara em Ideias 2002 (“Ideas for the Chamber”, in free translation)⁵.

2003 - The General Board of the Chamber of Deputies publishes Administrative Rule no. 7, dated 01/30/2003, for the constitution of the Working Group to develop Plenarinho Project⁶.

2004 - The website is launched. On the day of the launch, in selected public schools from each unit of the federation, a deputy presented the site and participated in a chat about the future of Brazilian children.

2005 - The program receives Selo Nota 10 (“Grade 10 Certification”), as an international recognition by DHNet (Human Rights and Culture Network) that awards the best Portuguese language websites worldwide.

2005 – Launch of the online course “Plenarinho para Professores” (“Plenarinho for teachers”), in partnership with the Center for Training, Training, and Improvement

⁴ Group of servers that presented the proposal: Elizabeth Bocchino, Sabá de Oliveira, and Maria do Amparo da Silva.

⁵ According to the Regulations of the last edition, “Prêmio Camara em Ideias, established by Portaria-DG No. 103-A, of 2002, integrates the Personnel Policy of the Chamber of Deputies and aims to encourage the participation of the employees in the improvement of administrative and legislative activities through the presentation of proposals that result in improvements in services or in a procedural, financial or material economy; or to incorporate values of sustainable development into the Chamber of Deputies. [...] The Management of the House undertakes to implement the winning proposal, provided as long as there is budgetary and financial availability of the Chamber of Deputies and interest of the Superior Administration.”

⁶ Members of the interdisciplinary group: Elizabeth Bocchino (Chair); Maria da Silva (General Secretariat of the Board); Yara Depieri (Center of Education, Training, and Improvement); Sabá de Oliveira (Stenography Department); Idenise Carvalho (Medical Department); Maria Albuquerque and Renata Sabbat (Social Communication Secretariat); Fernando Torres and Marcos de Souza (Information Technology Center); and Renata Pereira (Documentation and Information Center).

(Cefor) of the Chamber of Deputies.

2005 - Publication of the first edition of Revista do Plenarinho.

2006 - The website is upgraded to the portal category.

2006 - First edition of Camara Mirim.

2006 - First edition of Eleitor Mirim.

2008 - Signature of a technical cooperation agreement with Escola de Administração Fazendária – Esaf (School of Economic Education) and the International Labor Organization (ITO).

2011 - First edition of Escola na Camara - Elementary School.

2013 - Reformulation of the information architecture of the Portal. Conceptual redefinition of the program.

3.2. Plenarinho's objectives

Plenarinho is the result of a proposal from civil servants the Chamber of Deputies, presented in 2002. According to the original proposal, the program would integrate the “strategy to improve the image of the Chamber of Deputies”, offering alternatives to the media coverage, which has presented a notorious negative emphasis. The objectives included the rapprochement between children and deputies, the simulation of the legislative process, and the development of a sense of citizenship.

According to a 2004 document, Plenarinho's year of launch, its goal would be “to make a great contribution to the development of citizenship in Brazil”, in order to “prevent the new generations from receiving misconceptions about Parliament”.

In its first documents, the Chamber of Deputies is the focus of Plenarinho. More recently, in 2010, with the development of the Strategic Map (Table 2) and with the definition of the program's mission and values, it is observed the increase of the scope of the main objective, with the axis shifting towards the empowerment of the target audience:

Mission: To contribute to the citizen development of Brazilian children and youth through instruments of education and political-legislative communication, providing channels for the exercise of popular participation of this segment of society.

Vision: Be a reference in the national scenario, contributing to the Chamber of Deputies to be recognized by society as an institution that promotes citizenship and provides political-legislative education with excellence.

Table 2 –Plenarinho’s strategic map

Institutional role		
To contribute to the construction of citizen attitudes and political awareness in the new generations	To contribute to the understanding of the role and importance of the Legislative Branch	To contribute to the knowledge of the institutional role of the Chamber of Deputies
Target Audience		
To extend the reach of Plenarinho products to the children and young people	To improve interaction with educational institutions	To stimulate participation and collaboration of educators
Internal processes		
To develop new virtual participation tools	To improve the means and guarantee resources to promote actions to approach the target audience	To adapt and insert Plenarinho content in the communication vehicles and education instruments existing in the House
To develop partnerships and strengthen the links with public institutions that promote citizenship education	To develop virtual and face-to-face dissemination actions	To develop pedagogical content and materials of excellence
People and Technologies		
To ensure adequate staff with the skills required for the job	To ensure adequate technological infrastructure for the full operation and development of products	To ensure adequate facilities

Source: Plenarinho.

Thus, according to the mission and the strategic map, Plenarinho positions itself towards the “construction of citizen attitudes and political awareness in the new generations” in Brazil, “providing channels for the exercise of popular participation of this segment of society”, keeping the Chamber of Deputies as the institutional core of reference.

Plenarinho’s analysis, in this work, will consider the approaches coming from the most current discussions about the role of the program. In addition, it will use other criteria pointed out by several authors as necessary conditions for the success of this type of initiative. The assessment will be divided into two stages:

- a) Analysis of the Internet Portal - What is offered to the target audience, observing the dimensions: (1) Technological, (2) Communicational, (3) Educational, and (4) Political. The first three dimensions need to be well resolved to have the fourth succeed. It should be emphasized that this order reproduces Plenarinho’s itinerary: from a digital tool (1) of Public Relations (2) to a program of literacy (3) in politics (4).
- b) Analysis of Children’s Political Literacy – What the target audience offers as feedback to the program. It is concentrated in Camara Mirim, by the complexity of the action and wealth of information, specifically the 2013

edition, observing the content of the bills presented and their adherence to Plenarinho's objectives.

4. Analysis of Plenarinho Portal

The Plenarinho website, launched in 2004, was elevated to the portal category in 2006, with more features and a distinct feed and data maintenance platform. Since then, there have been changes to the layout and configuration of the homepage, but the information architecture has remained.

In 2013, the Chamber of Deputies began a process to manage Plenarinho Portal on a new platform for computer programming. What began as a procedure to increase and update the software and web servers became an opportunity to reflect on the portal, the production routines until it embraces the very paradigms on which Plenarinho was based. This reflection will be included in the following analysis as proposals for the new platform, which can be compared with the existing situation.

4.1. Technological Dimension

The first dimension refers to the technological apparatus of the portal. The Chamber of Deputies is an institution of national representation, based in Brasília-DF. The Technological dimension, materialized in the Internet portal, allows the House to have contact with the target audience in a permanent way.

Current configuration and statistics

The traffic on Portal Plenarinho⁷ varies according to the school year in Brazil, decreasing in the months of vacations (January, July, and December), which indicates an association of the access to school life of the children. The peak is in September, coinciding with the end of the registrations for Camara Mirim. The total number of page views, as of 2009⁸, remains between 300,000 and 400,000 per year.

Today, the main menu of Plenarinho is divided into subjects (Chamber of Deputies, Deputy, Citizenship, Brazil, Education, Ecology, Health), other categories (News, Reading Room, Fun, Your Space), and programs (Camara Mirim) (Images 1 and

⁷ Source: MELO, 2008 and *Google Analytics*.

⁸ The peak of access (180 thousand monthly) was in February 2008. The fall observed since that date is due to the withdrawal, from the portal's code, of the information that facilitated the tracking of the search engines. This was necessary because, in 2007, the number of accesses of Plenarinho overloaded the Rede Camara servers, compromising all associated portals (COSTA; MELO, 2010). As of 2009, the number of annual accesses remained constant.

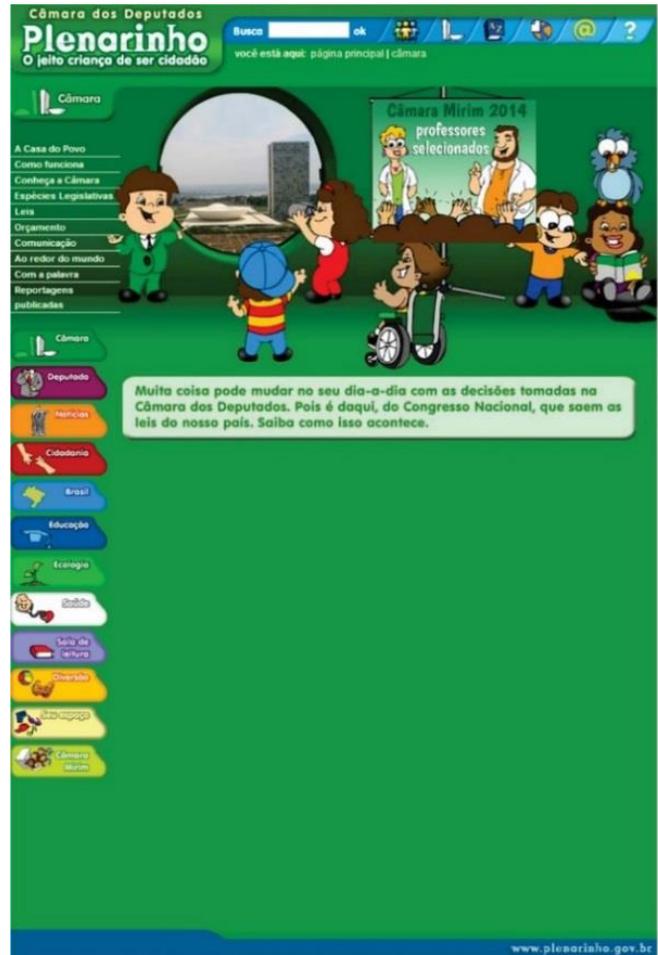
2).

Image 1 – Homepage



Source: Plenarinho.

Image 2 – Internal Page: Chamber of Deputies



Source: Plenarinho.

The products can be divided into:

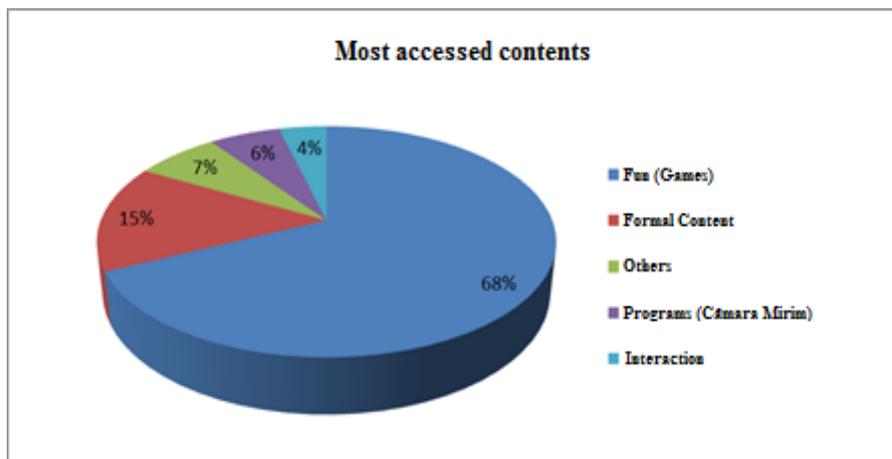
- Formal Content – mainly informative textual material on the subjects, which can be associated with other products, like animations and infographics;
- Fun – concentration of playful material;
- Interaction – registration in Clubinho (Little Club), virtual chat, Contact Us;
- Programs – Camara Mirim, Eleitor Mirim;
- Educational - to the adult audience, especially teachers.

Graph 1 brings the consolidation of the most accessed content⁹, considering the first 100 items. The games are, by far, the most sought-after product of Plenarinho. The

⁹ In order to measure traffic source statistics and most accessed content in Google Analytics, the data are concentrated on the time interval between April 8 and September 1, 2013 (registration period for Camara Mirim), to coincide with analysis of the children's political literacy (second part of this study).

“others” slice includes magazines, hobbies, animations, and the area for teachers.

Graph 1 - Most accessed content (April 8 to September 1, 2013)



Source: Google Analytics.

4.1.1. Quality analysis of Plenarinho Portal

Two kinds of criteria will be used in this analysis: those of quality, using the model of Stockdale and Borovicka (2006), based mainly on the work of DeLone and McLean (2003); and those of public digital communication, proposed by Silva (2009) to evaluate interfaces between State and citizen.

4.1.1.a. System quality

Stockdale and Borovicka (2006) enumerate the following requirements for system quality: Accessibility, Usability, Functionality, Responsiveness, Reliability, Flexibility, Security, and Communication.

Current Features

Plenarinho Portal, although operating on an obsolete platform (Plone, version 2, 2004), satisfies the quality requirements of the system. The **positive points** are:

- The URL is simple and easy to memorize (although it has no clear connection with the Chamber of Deputies): www.plenarinho.leg.br¹⁰. This is fundamental for Plenarinho, because the majority of accesses (44%) is direct, with Google being second, 32%;

¹⁰ The simple URL makes it easy to type in the browser for direct access. Note the difference, for example, from the URL of Camara Mirim of Florianópolis: <http://www.cmf.sc.gov.br/participacao-popular/881-popular/47-camara-mirim>.

- Multimedia content (text, audio, video, photo, image) offers different experiences for different users. Captions and descriptions increase accessibility;
- The portal is safe, an essential condition for the navigation of children (in order to avoid excessive exposure and even the action of pedophiles).

There are **negative points** that will mark out the proposals for the new portal:

- The limited data and traffic storage capacity of the Chamber of Deputies web server;
- The amount and richness of the graphic elements of the pages impair the speed of navigation. In addition, there is an excessive number of “clicks” until the information wanted is found;
- The layout of banners on the homepage is confusing;
- There is no advanced search.

In addition, the grouping of contents of different classifications in the menu confuses the user: subjects (Chamber of Deputies, Deputy, Citizenship, Brazil, Education, Ecology, Health), other categories (News, Reading Room, Fun, Your Space) and actions (Camara Mirim). Even among the subjects, the compartmentalization ends up dissociating, for example, House and Deputy, as well as Education and Reading Room.

The area “Your Space” has the largest number of resources for interaction, such as the Wall of Comments, Seja Xereta (Be Curious) (to send essays and stories) and the registration at Clubinho. But there are other channels scattered throughout the portal, such as “If I were a deputy” (in “Deputy”), “Continue the story” (in Reading Room), and Chat, which is in the upper menu. In addition, there are articles outside the News area, videos outside Plenarinho TV, and so on.

Proposals for a new platform for Plenarinho

The focus will shift from desktop access to mobile devices (mobile phones and tablets), which is where the current generation of children accesses the Internet. This way, the configuration, design, and content will privilege new media, with the development of an application. The measurement will also operate in a different way (not so much by accesses, typical measurement of Web 1.0, but by the number of interactions and downloads of resources).

The portal will continue to exist, both to maintain the legacy and to meet the demands of teachers in the schools’ computer labs. The content will be formatted for

Search Engine Optimization (SEO), to facilitate indexing by search engines and location by users.

The information architecture will be completely reformulated. The main menu will be divided by media type (video, audio, comics, game), facilitating access to the most wanted content. The entire textual legacy built over a decade will be reunited apart. The formal content will be more clearly differentiated from factual material (news).

The most prominent area will be “My Space” (formerly “Your Space”), which will bring together all interaction tools. It will receive content produced by the children themselves, in a collaborative construction based on the principles of Web 2.0 (O'REILLY, 2005). This innovation does not only concern Plenarinho. Contradictorily, children and young people’s political participation websites have the target audiences as the “receivers” of content, not allocating spaces for them to be “producers” (BANCJAY, BANCKINGHAM, 2010).

4.1.1.b. Quality of services

Stockdale and Borovicka (2006) cite the following requirements for the quality of services: Perception of quality of service, Evidence of trust building, the Construct of Empathy, Requests follow-up, and Customization.

Current Features

The highlight of Plenarinho Portal is the empathy with the target audience.

Proposals for the new platform

Plenarinho’s entire brand identity has been recreated, including logos, typography, and product design, to make it more contemporary.

Image 3 – Plenarinho: previous and new brands



Source: Plenarinho.

Regarding security, what is missing today will be included: the publication of the Privacy Policy and security alerts. To facilitate service to users and to reduce the number of requests regarding simple actions, an FAQ will be provided.

4.1.2. Plenarinho Portal as a digital interface between State and citizen

Silva (2009) proposes prerequisites that the digital interface must fulfill in order to contribute to the strengthening of modern democracy. There are three democratic principles: (1) Publicity - how to make the State more visible to the citizen. The information vector is predominantly from the State; (2) Responsiveness - how to make the State more responsive to the citizen. It is characterized by dialogue; (3) Porosity - how to make the State more open to public opinion. The main direction of the communicational flow comes from the citizen.

Plenarinho was analyzed by Silva (2009). The measurement of the items adopted by him shows the numerical predominance of Publicity material at the informative and instructional levels. In this respect, the present study coincides with Silva's - but the conclusions are different.

First, Silva (2009) did not consider the actions Eleitor Mirim and Camara Mirim, the great examples of the Responsiveness and Porosity requirements (in part, this may be due to faults in the information architecture of the current portal).

Second, even if he had computed these actions, each one would appear as a single item, numerically leveled, for example, with a text published about the Chamber of Deputies. However, the degree of complexity of an action such as Camara Mirim is much higher than the production of Publicity content, with greater involvement of the target audience and the human resources that support it.

Even on the current platform, since 2008, Plenarinho's digital interface already meets the prerequisites proposed by the author, although it is in an embryonic way at some points. The legacy of more than a decade now allows the program to focus more on interacting with the target audience, incorporating collaborative content, and gradually assessing actions.

It is important to reiterate that the principle of Porosity brings less technological, but much more human aspects. They depend on trained and allocated staff for this purpose. The most emblematic case is the aforementioned Camara Mirim. The bills sent by the children are examined by a committee of House consultants. In 2011 there were more than 1200 entries, for the selection of the three winners.

Both criteria from Stockdale and Borovicka (2006) and those from Silva (2009) measure the quality of a site by what it offers to the end user. Based on the above considerations, it is verified that the operation of software and web servers should also provide operating facilities for those who administer them. In the case of Plenarinho, the

new platform should offer mechanisms that allow the retrieval and cross-referencing of information received in the form of systematized reports that can be delivered to both the target audience (children and teachers) and parliamentarians, and even to press.

4.2. Communicational dimension

In Brazil, Plenarinho pioneered the construction of explicitly political content, aimed at children¹¹, on the Internet. The first on the Internet, it is considered reference for other institutional sites that have the same purpose.

Six characters were created to be Plenarinho's spokespersons, forming a team. Each one has its own characteristic, with the purpose of representing different segments and functions in the society, besides personifying each area of the current Portal (Table 3):

Table 3 - Characters

Characters	Who they are	Current Portal area
Zé Plenarinho and Ana Légis	Deputies	Chamber of Deputies, Deputies, Citizenship
Xereta	Reporter	News
Edu Coruja (the only character in the team who is not human and is an adult)	Educator	Education, Reading Room
Cida and Adão (whose union of names forms the word "cidadão", "citizen" in Portuguese)	Brothers representing citizens who do not hold political office	Your Space, Fun

Source: Elaborated by the author with Plenarinho data.

In 2005, a contest with the participation of about 500 children defined the characteristics of the seventh character, Vital, the boy in a wheelchair, representative of accessibility. Others appear in specific situations, such as teacher Josefa. The characters illustrate and present texts, appear in stories and comics, animations, games, and infographics.

¹¹ Previously, the subject was treated in textbooks in the extinct subjects Moral and Civic Education and Brazilian Social and Political Organization, of the former 1st grade of basic education, without using children's language. Other materials made bridges between wonderful tales and the universe of politics, like the musical "Os Saltimbancos" (Town Musicians) (composed by Luis Enríquez Bacalov, adapted by Chico Buarque in 1977).

Image 4 - Original characters



Source: Plenarinho.

It is always valid to emphasize that Plenarinho is neither an independent nor a commercial project. The place of speech is very precise, from within the Chamber of Deputies, in the National Congress, which is the largest institution of the federal Legislative Branch. Responsibility is multiplied because the target audience views content as a primary source of knowledge, produced by those who have the credentials to do so.

Plenarinho's daily challenge is to deal with a generally arid subject in a creative and understandable way for children, without losing sight of its institutional character. In order to analyze the Communication Dimension of the portal, the 8 C's of the good communication enumerated by Cutlip and Center (apud PINHO, 1990) will be used as a guide: Credibility; Context; Content; Clarity; Continuity; Consistency; Communication channels; and Capability of understanding of the public.

As in the Technological Dimension, the previous situation and the perspectives of the new platform will be in parallel.

Previous resources

Among the **positive points**, the communication channels of the Portal stand out. There are explanatory texts, news stories, comics, animations, games, hobbies, photos, images, infographics, audio stories, and songs. These formats are also available for children to send material to. Plenarinho still has printed publications, such as magazines, folders, card games, etc.

In the name of clarity, information about the State and legislation gets "translation". The great difficulty is to approach these subjects in a simple way, without distorting them nor using "baby talk".

Consistency is always sought, with the verification of information sources.

The **Negative points** in the communicational dimension include the fact that the seven original characters are children with the soul of adults. In his description, for

example, Xereta has the Grammar of Celso Cunha (a prominent Brazilian grammarian) as her bedside book. Two of the characters are deputies, and Zé Plenarinho wears a suit. In adventures, everyone has exemplary attitudes. That is, the characters are divided between the infantilized trait and the formal behavior, making it difficult for children to identify with them, compromising their credibility. Although each character has its own qualities, they are diluted, without it being possible to point out the real role of each one in the team.

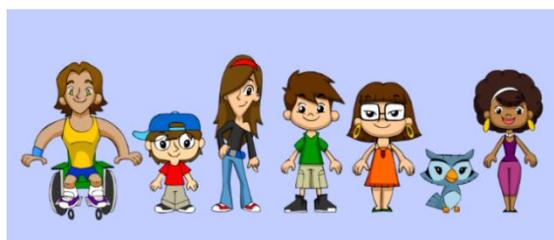
The definition of the target audience and its respective capacity for understanding were, for a long time, a concern to Plenarinho's staff. The age range of the primary addressee is very extensive: 7 to 14 years. The level of understanding and interests of a child who has just been literate are very different from those of an adolescent. Moreover, often, the content showed indecision: whether they had been written for children, or for their parents or teachers, or for schools and international organizations. Or for everyone at the same time, which is unfeasible for communication to take effect. As a possible consequence of this lack of definition, the News Agency and Child Clipping follow an agenda that may not coincide with the actual interests of the target audience.

Finally, communication continuity is achieved through the “Learn more” feature and links to the Glossary, when content is manually related. The material sent by users is not treated. There are no content correlation metadata.

Proposals

The concept of each character has been recreated. Each one has a “superpower” associated with a citizenship value, but also a small “defect”, giving him or her an air of a prankish child, but without interfering with his or her recognition as the “good guy” of the story. The characters are redesigned, with a more contemporary trait. The union of the powers of each character is what will determine the victory.

Image 5 - New characters



Source: Plenarinho

Much content, especially informational, has already been produced. The idea now is to moderate contributions from the target audience and focus on the child empowerment guidelines.

The News Agency and Child Clipping will lose the urgency and the obligation to reproduce all the procedures of the legislative matters, emphasizing the aspects that can immediately interfere in the children's lives.

The principles of clarity and consistency will be maintained.

To increase the continuity of communication, there will be indexing by theme and tag for automatic correlation of content, including different types of media and user material. The Glossary will be retained.

Communication channels will be kept, but more clearly organized.

The content can be divided into two age groups: 7 to 10 years old and 11 to 14 years old. The material for teachers will be gathered in its own area.

4.3. Educational Dimension

According to Plenarinho's¹² traffic source data, among the 50 most visited items, 21 are educational websites and blogs. As seen previously, the accesses to the portal follow the school year, decreasing during vacations.

Plenarinho Portal, therefore, maintains a very close relationship with teachers and the school environment. Other data can boost this relationship: according to the ICT Online Kids 2012 Brazil Survey, most children and adolescents between 9 and 16 years old access the internet at school (42%) and use the web to do school work (82%). This same research brings several articles about the importance of digital interfaces in the educational process.

In these terms, the adoption of Plenarinho in schools is something apparently logical, but there are two difficulties related to the teaching audience, in relation to two literacies: the digital and the political ones.

Santos (2012) shows that the current generation of teachers has difficulties working with digital devices, especially the Internet, in the classroom. It uses educational resources from the 19th century for a class that is born "plugged in" and takes on technology as a matter of course.

Regarding political literacy, teachers face with the mission of offering it to the students, without having themselves internalized it. Hart (2002, apud ACKERMANN et

¹² Source: Google Analytics

al., 2003) cites, for example, situations where adults are told to encourage children to express their points of view and participate in decisions when they themselves have never enjoyed such opportunities.

The tension and disparities of literacies are exacerbated in the case of an interface such as Plenarinho, which is both political and digital at the same time. What is recommended as power sharing can be interpreted by the teacher as a loss of this power: “[...] all pupils’ impetus is categorically controlled by teachers, who confuse freedom with disorder, creativity with disconnection, initiative with rebellion” (SANTOS, 2012, p. 83, free translation). At the same time, Santos (2012) affirms that the intervention of the teacher is essential so that the child is not left adrift.

The strengthening of Plenarinho’s partnership with schools has, then, a double educational action: for students and for teachers. Santos (2012) also proposes ways to work on children’s education on digital platforms. He defends that there should be no information without a playful component, nor playful content without information. This is especially important for Plenarinho.

Current Features

Plenarinho information material is a **positive aspect**. It also aims to provide subsidies for school research. Several other products are published to attract children’s attention, in the expectation that they will continue to navigate and come across more information about politics.

As **negative aspects**, it is noted that, although there are materials that combine fun and information, in relation to what Santos suggests (2012), there are texts without playfulness and entertainment without informative content.

Plenarinho for Teachers brings some pedagogical projects. Between 2005 and 2014, there was a distance course, made in partnership with the Center for Education, Training, and Improvement of the Chamber of Deputies (Cefor), discontinued due to technological and paradigmatic obsolescence.

One of the concerns - and criticism - of teachers in schools is the extensive compulsory curriculum. There is a false understanding that “citizenship” would be “one more subject”. In order to face this objection, Plenarinho lacks more pedagogical proposals that would allow permeating the political literacy in the content of the various subjects (mathematics, sciences, etc.).

Proposals

With the possibility of an automatic correlation of contents, games, comics, and others will be listed on the same page, according to the subject matter, propitiating the playfulness proposed by Santos (2012). Entertainment products will always be created from Crick's elements (Table 1).

Legislative information will remain (Knowledge and Understanding, according to Crick, 1998), but the highlight will be the development of democratic experiences in the school environment. The idea for the new technological area is to expand the offer of pedagogical projects and establish a virtual network of content and good practices exchange among educators.

4.4. Political dimension

The first three dimensions - technological, communicational and educational - can be met in all premises but, to reach the objectives of Plenarinho, they do not sustain themselves without the fourth - political literacy. However, the latter is potentialized with the precedence of the first three.

Plenarinho, in its platform, products, and actions, should provide a democratic experience to the target audience. The program contains all the elements of Crick (1998). The emphasis is on knowledge and understanding, especially regarding the Chamber of Deputies and the Legislative Branch. Even so, the current portal satisfies the other criteria, especially in products such as comic books and animations. Actions, especially the face-to-face ones, strengthen the social dimension to political literacy.

It is now important to analyze the children's feedback in relation to what Plenarinho offers. The research method chosen was Content Analysis, as detailed by Babbie (2000). It consists in the selection of the unit of analysis, in the codification of the contents (the manifest or latent ones), in the conceptualization and creation of the categories of codification, and in the assessment of the contents.

Camara Mirim action was chosen, having as units of analysis the bills sent by the children.

5. Analysis of the Children's Political Literacy – Camara Mirim

Camara Mirim is a contest of bills which is open for all students in grades 5 to 9 of public and private schools in Brazil. A committee of legislative consultants from the Chamber of Deputies selects three bills. The authors come to Brasilia-DF with expenses

paid by the House, to defend their proposals in the Sessão Mirim (Plenary Session), composed by other children.

Between 2006 and 2013, more than 4500 bills were sent, highlighting 2011, when Plenarinho received 1237 registrations.

5.1. Winners of Camara Mirim

The first codification in this content analysis is the unfolding of the winning draft bills of Camara Mirim¹³. Table 4 shows the selection of those that had some concrete effect.

Of the 24 projects, seven were “sponsored” by federal deputies and now follow the legislative process in the Chamber of Deputies, bringing explicit references to Camara Mirim (in the table they are identified with the verb “to inspire”).

There are bills of young parliamentarians that are aligned with other proposals or public policies, presented after the editions of Camara Mirim. There is no way to state whether they were the inspiration for such proposals. In any case, this indicates that the children’s ideas are in tune with what has been addressed in the national political scene.

Other bills have the same content as other proposals that were already in progress.

Table 4 - Selection of winning bills of Camara Mirim and their unfoldings

Year	Name ¹⁴	City / State	Summary	Unfolding	Others
2006	Mariana Vieira	SC	To include Citizenship in the Curriculum.	PLS 2/2012 and PL 4744/2012 have the same content.	It received 84% of votes in favor (Vote on the Web) ¹⁵
2006	Pedro Carvalho	RN	Every orphan child residing in a non-profit collective shelter will have priority access to the vacancy in the public-school system.	It inspired PL 1685/2007, attached to PL 1579/2007.	

¹³ For more details and follow-up of the proposals, access <http://www.camara.leg.br/sileg/default.asp>. To know the full laws, access <http://www2.camara.leg.br/atividade-legislativa/legislacao>.

¹⁴ The names of the children are present in the Plenarinho Portal and are widely divulged by the internal and external media. Those responsible for the winners sign an authorization for the use of information by the Chamber of Deputies, which includes their publication in any currently or eventually existing media.

¹⁵ <http://www.votenaweb.com.br/projetos/pls-2-2012>

2007	Karinne Mendonça	Taguatinga (DF)	To end child labor.	It inspired PL 2398/2007, attached to PL 7650/2006. Decree 3.597/2000 (regulated by Decree 6481/2008) and Decree 4134/2002 already dealt with the issue.	
2007	Mallena Lira	Iracema (CE)	To prohibit the transportation of students in open vehicles (“paus de arara”).	It inspired PL 2561/2007, attached to PL 2397/2007.	

Year	Name ¹⁶	City / State	Summary	Unfolding	Others
2007	Larissa Gonçalves	Belo Horizonte (MG)	Every Brazilian citizen is subject to the same laws and penalties provided for therein (end of the privileged forum).	PEC 470/2005 already deals with the subject.	It received 74% of votes in favor (Vote on the Web) ¹⁷
2008	Stephanie Ferreira	São José dos Campos (SP)	Banknotes must bring value in Braille.	PL 475/2011 has the same content. Appended to PL 7699/2006, which establishes the Statute of the Disabled Person. In 2012, the Central Bank issued notes in different sizes to facilitate identification by people with visual impairment.	
2009	Richard Oliveira	São José dos Campos (SP)	All public buildings to be built should have a system for storing and reusing rainwater.	It inspired PL 7231/2010, attached to PL 5733/2009.	It received 95% of votes in favor (Vote on the Web) ¹⁸
2009	Carlos Marcus da Silva	Iracema (CE)	To establish requirements to be a guardianship counselor.	PL 2602/2007 and PLS 479/2009 have the same content.	Video with its history received the 1st place in the 7th Competition Cases of ECA - Pro-Menino in 2011 ¹⁹ .
2010	Lorena Resende	Sobradinho (DF)	All buses must have seat belts for children up to five years old.	It inspired PL 7910/2010, attached to PL 6932/2010.	It received 75% of votes in favor in the Vote on the Web ²⁰

¹⁶ The names of the children are present in the Plenarinho Portal and are widely divulged by the internal and external media. Those responsible for the winners sign an authorization for the use of information by the Chamber of Deputies, which includes their publication in any currently or eventually existing media.

¹⁷ <http://www.votenaweb.com.br/projetos/pec-470-2005>

¹⁸ <http://www.votenaweb.com.br/projetos/plc-7231-2010>

¹⁹ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp2tkeE8JLw>

²⁰ <http://www.votenaweb.com.br/projetos/plc-7910-2010>

2010	Milena Silva and Maria Carolina Rodrigues	Campos dos Goytacazes (RJ)	Every visually impaired person is entitled to a guide dog, and the federal government is obliged to provide trained dogs. It is mandatory to build training kennels in all capitals, with more than 100,000 inhabitants.	In nov. 2011, the Federal Government launched the Live Without Limit action, which provides for the implementation of Training Centers for Guide Dogs. Brazil is the only country in Latin America that works with this type of training. ²¹	
------	---	----------------------------	--	---	--

to be continued

Year	Name ²²	City / State	Summary	Unfolding	Others
2010	Patrícia Rocha	João Ramalho (SP)	To oblige the installation of a device to fix bicycles in public buildings and public places in all municipalities.	It inspired PL 7909/2010.	It received 94% of votes in favor in the Vote on the Web ²³
2011	Túlio Machado	São Paulo (SP)	Every Brazilian citizen will be informed of how much, in percentages, will be paying taxes on any product.	Law 12741/2012 requires detailed taxation in the invoice.	
2011	André Silva	Brasília (DF)	Every public agency website should have a page intended for children, with explanations about what the public agency does and its importance for the country and for the people.	The idea is not the object of a proposition. However, several public agencies already have children's sites, such as the Public Prosecutor's Office (http://www.turminha.mpf.mp.br/), IBGE (http://7a12.ibge.gov.br/), EBC (http://www.ebc.com.br/infantil), STJ (http://www.stjunior.stj.jus.br).	
2012	Mayara Bezerra	Iracema (CE)	Every child has the right to have a photo ID and other data from her and her parents from birth.	PL 278/2011 has the same content.	
2012	Ana Caroline da Silva	Guaraí (TO)	To guarantee parents the right to be absent from work to go to their children's school, upon convocation of the school unit.	PLS 620/2011 has the same content.	

to be continued

²¹ ²¹ See <http://www.brasil.gov.br/cidadania-e-justica/2013/04/brasil-e-o-unico-pais-da-america-latina-que-trabalha-com-caca-de-caes-guia>

²² The names of the children are present in the Plenarinho Portal and are widely divulged by the internal and external media. Those responsible for the winners sign an authorization for the use of information by the Chamber of Deputies, which includes their publication in any currently or eventually existing media.

²³ <http://www.votenaweb.com.br/projetos/plc-7909-2010>

Year	Name ²⁴	City / State	Summary	Unfolding	Others
2013	Maila Santos	Primavera do Leste (MT)	Arborization of “Minha Casa, Minha Vida” (social housing program).	It inspired a Request signed by Deputy Wellington Fagundes to the Executive Branch ²⁵ . The proposal is one of the items in the Blue Seal of Caixa, the bank responsible for “Minha Casa, Minha Vida” ²⁶ .	
2013	Ana Clara Silva	Belo Horizonte (MG)	It is obliged to inform the amount of sugar contained in the food, through the nutritional table, in a new category called “SUGAR”.	PL 7141/2014, attached to PL 2356/2003, has the same content. PL 6451/2009, attached to PL 1350/2007, has the same content.	It received 88% of votes in favor in the Vote on the Web ²⁷ .

Source: Elaborated by the author with Plenarinho data.

5.2. Camara Mirim 2013

The second codification in this content analysis is the adherence or not of children's bills to Plenarinho's objectives. For this phase, the 2013 edition of Camara Mirim was chosen. In all, 411 bills were registered, via the portal, e-mail and post office. Only those sent by the Portal (352 registrations) will be part of the analysis because the registration form is contextualized in the Plenarinho environment.

The categories were raised based on the problems that the children intended to solve with their bills. At the same time, this content was assessed through the comparison with what Plenarinho publishes on the portal.

They are adherent to Plenarinho's content:

- Education - There are several suggestions for inclusion of subjects in the school curriculum (environment, constitutional law, consumer law, human rights, first aid, etc.) and the valuing of teachers, as well as indications of the school as a place of assistance (medical, dental, nutritional and psychological).

²⁴ The names of the children are present in the Plenarinho Portal and are widely divulged by the internal and external media. Those responsible for the winners sign an authorization for the use of information by the Chamber of Deputies, which includes their publication in any currently or eventually existing media.

²⁵

http://www.camara.gov.br/proposicoesWeb/prop_mostrarintegra;jsessionid=12398216AF54E21AA03745455D808391.node1?codteor=1207380&filename=INC+5554/2013

²⁶ According <http://mcmv.caixa.gov.br/estudante-quer-tornar-obrigatoria-arborizacao-do-minha-casa-minha-vida/>

²⁷ <http://www.votenaweb.com.br/projetos/plc-6451-2009>

- Environment - Reforestation of the Atlantic Forest, planting of a tree at each birth, protection of homeless animals, are ideas in line with Plenarinho's materials.
- Health - There are projects to improve Sistema Único de Saúde – SUS (Brazilian publicly funded health care system), but also concerns about smoking and the weight of backpacks, which are on Plenarinho's agenda.
- Internet use for political purposes and advocacy - The proposals include a virtual social network where everyone could be a “politician” and the creation of a website to receive denunciations of sexual violence against children and adolescents. Plenarinho Portal itself is an initiative that uses the Internet to foster political participation.
- Deliberation forums - Establishment of democratic spaces for discussion and resolution of problems in schools, streets, and neighborhoods. Plenarinho has animations and comic strips that work on this issue in the school environment.
- Behaviors in the environment in which one lives - Creation of community gardens, selective garbage collection, water use, children as environmental inspectors, are among these proposals. They show possibilities of acting politically at the micro level, that is, they describe actions that can be performed by the children themselves in their communities, especially in schools. It is an appropriation of political doing and awareness of individual citizenship. This will be the guiding principle for the new Plenarinho.
- Budget awareness - Some bills demonstrate knowledge about the financial, tax and budgetary aspects of legislation, pointing out sources of funds and justifications for tax exemptions. The most accessed game of Plenarinho is the Game of the Budget, which intends to introduce the subject to the children.
- Defense of children's rights - In this discursive formation are bills that deal with the fight against bullying and sexual abuse. These are themes treated by Plenarinho Team in articles and comic books. One of the children's bills cites Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente - ECA (the Child and Adolescent Statute) to protect indigenous children against sexual violence, considered as “cultural” in some tribes.
- Protection of the most vulnerable - This topic has very creative proposals, such as the adequacy of school meals for diabetics, the School for the Elderly, the requirement of newborn bloodspot test in the hospital and the release of women from work to undergo the Pap smear. There are also bills for improvements in

accessibility and assistance to homeless people. The concern for the most vulnerable shows that children need not keep identity with these audiences, to recognize their rights and take care of them.

They are not adherent to Plenarinho's guidelines:

Some bills bring content that is not found in Plenarinho, but are themes of repercussion in the political discussion, present in party propaganda, media journalism, and interpersonal conversations:

- Concern about welfarism – Children's proposals add more conditions and counterparts to receiving benefits from income transfers and insurance programs. There is, for example, the fixing of the maximum time for receiving scholarships, the obligation of philanthropic work in the term of unemployment insurance and the work of prisoners.
- Reduction of the age of criminal responsibility - Of the total of 352 bills registered by the Portal, nine requested the reduction of the age of criminal responsibility. This is a curious fact because it shows children punishing other children. This position contradicts the Federal Constitution and ECA. The media's insistence on the coverage of homicides committed by adolescents may be at the root of this posture of some candidates for young parliamentarians.

The third codification in this content analysis concerns political literacy. The assessment of a sample of the bills sent by the children²⁸ has, by categories, the requirements presented by Crick (1998). Three matrices were created, with 16 values, nine practices and 12 acquirements (Table 1), identifying the aspects of each bill served in each category. This is a deeper analysis, which looks at non-manifest content.

Most bills (74%) filled half of the values or more. As in the values, the majority (66%) met more than half of the requirements for the practices listed by Crick.

Unlike the values and practices records, the numbers of knowledge requirements served were closer in the samples, among those that filled 50% or more and those that filled less than 50% - in the 57% range. This is an interesting fact, which reduces the

²⁸ Sample of 10% of total bills sent by children. The proportion of gender and place of origin was maintained, and then the bills were randomly selected. To ensure the representativeness of the sample, as well as the applicability of the requirements, the data were compared to a second sample, assembled identically. The results were very close; thus, it is possible to state that the analyzed sample corresponds statistically to the "spoon for tasting the soup".

weight of knowledge in the acquisition of values and in the adoption of democratic practices.

The least-observed requirement (addressed in only one bill in each sample, and briefly) refers to knowledge about “Parliaments at local, national, continental and international levels, including how they function and transform”. These data reveal that although Plenarinho Portal offers a wide range of information about the Chamber of Deputies and the Legislative Branch, they are not mentioned in children’s bills.

In observing the results, some understandings of children's political literacy are reached in the Camara Mirim 2013:

- The socio-historical and political context of the year, especially the protests that took over the country during June 2013 and became known as “Brazil’s June Journeys” or “2013 Protests”, had a limited impact on the proposals submitted and the selection of the winners.
- Bills that were not aligned with Plenarinho’s agenda were also not among those that met the most requirements of Crick. It is believed that the demands heard on virtual networks, on the streets, and in the media have the State as recipient - and the responsible for the resolution of problems.
- Bills that most met Crick’s requirements propose new statutes and bring individual responsibility to the political process. Creativity, beyond the media discourse, emphasizes children’s sensitivity to their reality.

6. Plenarinho’s Challenges

Technological dimension

All refinement and creation proposals aim to further enrich the navigation experience on Plenarinho. However, a paradox arises: the attractiveness of the portal can stimulate children to spend even more time on the Internet, surpassing the threshold of what specialists consider healthy.

A second paradox refers to the higher Porosity (SILVA, 2009), with content production by children (O’REILLY, 2005). The success of actions can compromise their sustainability and even make them unfeasible, due to the overload of the people who perform the work of moderation and treatment of this content²⁹.

²⁹ Like E-Democracia Portal (E-Democracy) of the Chamber of Deputies, analyzed by Faria (2012), the support of the technical personnel of human resources is fundamental for Plenarinho.

Plenarinho also must deal with growing competition with other sites (especially the entertainment ones), online games and social media that do not align with citizenship education.

Communicational dimension

Plenarinho is maintained by a formal institution, which brings requirements in the approaches of the themes. Several issues are under discussion in the House, and it is up to the program not to take sides until they are transformed into laws.

Plenarinho needs to be cautious in the configuration of the villain characters of the stories. Most of the time, they are not human, so that they cannot be associated with any real politician, nor even with people who are part of the children's circle of coexistence.

In the commitment to protect children, Plenarinho often needs to address issues that “no one wants to treat”, such as sexual abuse of children and teenagers, not considering them as referents of the message (when talking about them), but as recipients (when talking to them). Thus, the portal has content that is unique.

Plenarinho does an extremely delicate job because it deals with the children's audience. If, on the one hand, the program is a source of positive information about the Chamber of Deputies for the media, on the other hand, just a single problem would suffice for the decade-long effort to collapse.

There is also mistrust on the part of academics, politicians, and families about children's political literacy, which has a very tenuous limit to partisan or “ideological” indoctrination. Ceaser (2013), for example, argues in favor of civic rather than political education because it could destabilize “the system” and cause serious damage to republican values and even to democracy.

As neutrality is impossible to achieve, Plenarinho potentially hangs in the balance of both conservatives and progressives.

Educational dimension

The educational system itself is undemocratic. Teachers resent not being able to participate in curricular decisions, made by “bureaucrats in their offices in the Ministry of Education, who have never stepped into a classroom”³⁰. In turn, teachers report that it

³⁰ Teacher's Informal report, during a presentation of Plenarinho in a public school in Sobradinho-DF.

is much easier to give orders and demand obedience from children – “a democratic child is a real handful”³¹ -, reproducing the same authoritarian spiral to which they were submitted when they were children and to which they are still subject, as professionals of the education system.

However, the authoritarian barrier or even the resistance to political literacy should not prevent schools from being the main partners of Plenarinho. For Lockyer (2008), it is not necessary for schools (or families) to be completely democratic institutions to allow for political engagement. If they recognize students as citizens, considering the extent of their rights and responsibilities, it is already the first step for transformation to take place – starting from the children themselves.

Political dimension

It is necessary to understand Plenarinho within the context of the Chamber of Deputies. Generally speaking, deputies do not see Plenarinho as a way to improve their parliamentary work. The few who are willing to meet it and have the opportunity to do so are sympathetic to the program, helping to publicize it in their states, as a complement to the approach with their bases, and participate in the actions when invited. It is fact that the children do not vote and thus would not be among the voters of the deputies, to whom usually their activity is addressed.

The Board of the House also considers Plenarinho with goodwill and does not refuse to contribute to its actions, either with financial resources or with logistics (which, in Camara Mirim, involves many sectors of administration and the legislative area, such as the General Secretariat of the Board).

However, taking into account the volume of activities, Plenarinho has a small team³². It should be remembered that it was an initiative of civil servants, not of parliamentarians, nor of society. Its development must be credited to the personal effort of the team in training. At the same time, the program enjoys considerable autonomy.

Kies (2010) acknowledges that, for many parliamentarians, the political process is already complicated enough to be integrated with other forms of popular participation. When this participation comes from an audience that is not even a voter, it is natural that Plenarinho ends up being seen by the House (and by the Social Communication

³¹ Teacher's Informal report, during a presentation of Plenarinho in a public school in Sobradinho-DF

³² Plenarinho team consists of one coordinator, one editor-in-chief, one editor, two illustrators, one game programmer and two journalism trainees.

Secretariat itself, to which it is subordinated) as an ancillary program, although it attracts appreciation.

In summary, the difficulties shown above are examples of what any children and young people's political literacy initiative will have to face, depending on the activities it is planning to carry out. For websites, the challenges of Plenarinho's technological dimension will be similar. And so, respectively, for communication products (printed or electronic media, presentations, etc.) in the communicational dimension; and for schools, in the educational dimension. The latter dimension is particularly sensitive to State institutions, such as legislative schools and children's parliaments in states and municipalities.

7. Conclusions

Since its creation, Plenarinho, a relationship program of the Chamber of Deputies with young people, has continuously evolved. In this way, the quest for excellence is observed in four dimensions:

1. Technological – a robust, secure, versatile, accessible and user-friendly platform for both users and managers, allowing the structuring of data;
2. Communicational – a well-structured content, in a careful language, which connects with the immediate reality and is adequate for both the target audience and the institution's objectives;
3. Educational - elements that are both playful and educational, which cater to children and support the teacher;
4. Political - a broad scenario encompassing concepts, values, practices, and knowledge, as proposed by Crick (1998).

It is possible to note the increase of the scope of the program's main objective, by moving the initial axis from giving information about the Chamber of Deputies towards the empowerment of the young audience through political literacy. The legacy of more than ten years now allows Plenarinho to dedicate itself more to the interaction with the target audience, with the incorporation of collaborative content and the gradual assessment of actions.

The Internet is preponderant for Plenarinho, a program of an institution of national representation, but with only one head office, in the capital. The focus, however, will no longer be on the access by computers, turning to mobile devices (cell phones and tablets), which is where the current generation of children uses the Internet.

Even with the Internet, Plenarinho does not give up face-to-face actions. They are those that can add the social aspect to political literacy, as recommended by Arthur and Davison (2000). Camara Mirim brings encouraging results on the political literacy of the participating children and tends to remain the flagship of the program. Most of the bills entered in the 2013 edition met more than 50% of Crick's requirements (1998). The first benefit of participation is in the opportunity to participate, reiterating that the prior orientation for registration adds values, practices, and knowledge already from the beginning.

Specific knowledge about the Chamber of Deputies and the Legislative Branch, so dear to Plenarinho Portal since its creation, were not decisive for the formulation of children's proposals. However, concepts discussed in the comics, animations and news stories on the main themes of the program (Education, Environment, and Health) were present in most bills. These themes set the tone of the Camara Mirim 2013, while even the flags of the June Journeys in Brazil were mentioned only in what related to them.

Several bills of the candidates for young parliamentarians surprised with creativity and sensitivity to socioeconomic issues, both local and national ones, especially the concern for the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Even with success in various products and actions, Plenarinho must face several challenges to continue progressing and even existing. These challenges are not unique to it and impose themselves upon any young people's political literacy program, which makes this analysis particularly useful for similar initiatives.

There are two paradoxes for the technological dimension, both external and internal, respectively: Plenarinho's success may imply the excessive permanence of children on the Internet and, at the same time, the overload of the staff in the handling of what it receives from the public. The web is also an environment of discursive dispute, in which appeals of all types present strong competition with citizen education.

In the educational dimension, the continuous and growing approach with teachers is imperative, so that Plenarinho does not make insular decisions, distant from the reality of the classroom, "with its bureaucrats in air-conditioned offices" in the federal capital.

The sensitive issues represent a constant risk in the communicational dimension. In addition, since Plenarinho cannot take sides of issues in progress in the National Congress, it is liable to lose the chance to promote the debate with its target audience or even become a biased program.

With its restricted team, Plenarinho has small reach even within the Chamber of Deputies. Several parliamentarians and sectors in the House do not know what the program does. In general, the deputies still see Plenarinho as a tool of Public Relations, as it was in its origin.

In addition to the reduced reach of the dissemination of its actions before the vast universe of youngsters in Brazil, there is the fact that children are not always able to apply what they learn in political literacy.

It has been understood that Plenarinho remains at the latent level. Its potential is gigantic, but its stage still consists of planting seeds. Promising. Necessary. For new and current generations.

References

A HANDBOOK on child participation in Parliament: handbook for parliamentarians N. 18. 2011. Inter-Parliamentary Union e Unesco. Disponível em: <http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/child-parl-e.pdf>. Acesso em: 12 maio 2014.

ACKERMANN L., FEENY, T, HART, J. & NEWMAN, J. **Understanding & evaluating children's participation**: a review of contemporary literature. Plan UK/ Plan International. Out. 2003. Disponível em: https://www.plan.org.au/~media/Documents/Research%20and%20Reports/Child_Participation_Literature_Review.ashx. Acesso em: 2 abr. 2014.

ARTHUR, J.; DAVISON, J. Social literacy and citizenship education in the school curriculum. **The Curriculum Journal**, v. 11, n. 1, p. 9-23, Spring 2000.

BABBIE, E. **Fundamentos de la investigación social**. Mexico: Thompson Editores, 2000.

BANAJI, S.; BUCKINGHAM, D. Young people, the internet, and civic participation: an overview of key findings from the CivicWeb Project. **International Journal of Learning and Media**, v. 2, n. 1, p. 15-24, 2010. Disponível em: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/29543/>. Acesso em: 12 maio 2014.

BOCCHINO, E. V.; SABÁ, C. M. F. O.; SILVA, M. A. B. **www.plenarinho.gov.br: não apenas um site, um instrumento a serviço da cidadania**. Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, 2002.

BRASIL. Congresso Nacional. Câmara dos Deputados. **Projeto de criação do portal infantil da Câmara dos Deputados**. Resultado do grupo de trabalho instituído pela Portaria nº 7 de 2003. Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, 2003.

BRASIL. Congresso Nacional. Câmara dos Deputados. **Qual é o objetivo do Plenarinho?** Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, 2004.

BRASIL. Lei nº 8.069, de 13 de julho de 1990. Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente (ECA). **Diário Oficial da União**, Seção 1, p. 13563. 16 jul. 1990.

CAUSOS do ECA: histórias que tecem a rede: o Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente. São Paulo: Fundação Telefônica, 2011. Disponível em: <http://www.promenino.org.br/Portals/0/CausosdoECA/Causos7/Causos%20do%20ECA%207.pdf>. Acesso em: 9 jun. 2014.

CEASER, J. W. **The role of political science and political scientists in civic education**. Washington: American Enterprise Institute; Program on American Citizenship, 2013.

COSSON, R. **Escolas do legislativo, escolas de democracia**. Brasília: Câmara Edições Câmara, 2008. Disponível em: <http://bd.camara.gov.br/bd/handle/bdcamara/2662>. Acesso em: 15 abr. 2014.

COSTA, A.C.; MELO, A. M. Plenarinho: o jeito criança de ser cidadão. Prisma.com: **Revista de Ciências e Tecnologia de Informação e Comunicação**, n. 11, p. 1-16, 2010. Disponível em: <http://revistas.ua.pt/index.php/prismacom/article/view/725>. Acesso em: 28 maio 2014.

CRICK, B (Org). **Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools**. Final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship. London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998. Disponível em: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4385/1/crickreport1998.pdf>. Acesso em: 28 maio 2014.

FARIA, C. F. S. **O parlamento aberto na era da internet: pode o povo colaborar com o Legislativo na elaboração das leis?** Brasília: Edições Câmara, 2012.

FOX, N. H. Teaching (is not) activism. **Radical Teacher**, n. 94, p. 14-23, Fall 2012.

LOCKYER, A. Education for citizenship: children as citizen and political literacy. *In*: INVERNIZZI, A.; WILLIAMS, J. (Ed). **Children and citizenship**. London: Sage Publications, 2008.

KIES, Raphaël. **Promises and limits of web-deliberation**. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

O'REILLY, T. **What Is Web 2.0: design patterns and business models for the next generation of software**. 2005. Disponível em: <http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>. Acesso em: 30 maio 2014.

MARTINS, L. M. **Educomunicação para a democracia: o programa Plenarinho e o nível de letramento político infanto-juvenil**. 2012. 118 f. Monografia (Especialização em Instituições e Processos Políticos do Legislativo) –Centro de Formação, Treinamento e Aperfeiçoamento da Câmara dos Deputados, 2012. Disponível em: <http://bd.camara.gov.br/bd/handle/bdcamara/10032?show=full>. Acesso em: 16 mar. 2014.

MELO, M. R. M. **Educação política para a cidadania**: a contribuição da Câmara dos Deputados. 2008. 143 f. Monografia (Especialização em Instituições e Processos Políticos do Legislativo) – Centro de Formação, Treinamento e Aperfeiçoamento da Câmara dos Deputados, 2008. Disponível em: <http://bd.camara.gov.br/bd/handle/bdcamara/383>. Acesso em: 16 mar. 2014.

MONTEIRO, T. Oralidade e cidadania: alunos da Escola Estadual Maroja Neto, de Belém (PA), ganham voz e voto no Projeto Câmara Mirim. **E-legis**: Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação da Câmara dos Deputados, v. 8, n. 16, p. 96-107, jan./abr., 2015. Disponível em: <http://e-legis.camara.leg.br/cefor/index.php/e-legis/article/view/202>. Acesso em: 25 nov. 2015.

PINHO, J. B. **Propaganda institucional**. São Paulo: Summus, 1990.

PLENARINHO. Câmara dos Deputados. Disponível em: www.plenarinho.leg.br. Acesso em: 3 mar. 2014.

SANTOS, G. L. **Tablets, laptops, computadores e crianças pequenas**: novas linguagens, velhas situações na educação infantil. Brasília: Liber Livros, 2012.

SILVA, S. P. **Estado, democracia e internet**: requisitos democráticos e dimensões analíticas para a interface digital do Estado. 2009. 424 f. Tese (Doutorado em Comunicação e Culturas Contemporâneas) – Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2009. Disponível em: <https://repositorio.ufba.br/ri/handle/ri/5211>. Acesso em: 20 maio 2014.

STOCKDALE, R.; BOROVIČKA, M. **Using Quality Dimensions in the Evaluation of Websites. Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism**. Innsbruck: Innsbruck University School of Management, 2006. Disponível em: <http://www.researchgate.net/>. Acesso em: 17 maio 2014.

TIC DOMICÍLIOS 2012. São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2013. Disponível em: <http://www.cetic.br/usuarios/tic/2012/apresentacao-tic-domicilios-2012.pdf>. Acesso em: 21 maio 2014.

TIC EDUCAÇÃO 2012. São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2013. Disponível em: <http://www.cetic.br/educacao/2012/apresentacao-tic-educacao-2012.pdf>. Acesso em: 21 maio 2014.

TIC KIDS ONLINE BRASIL 2012: pesquisa sobre o uso da internet por crianças e adolescentes no Brasil. São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2013. Disponível em: <http://www.cetic.br/publicacoes/2012/tic-kids-online-2012.pdf>. Acesso em: 21 maio 2014.

Article received on: 10/26/2015

Article accepted for publication: 01/04/2016