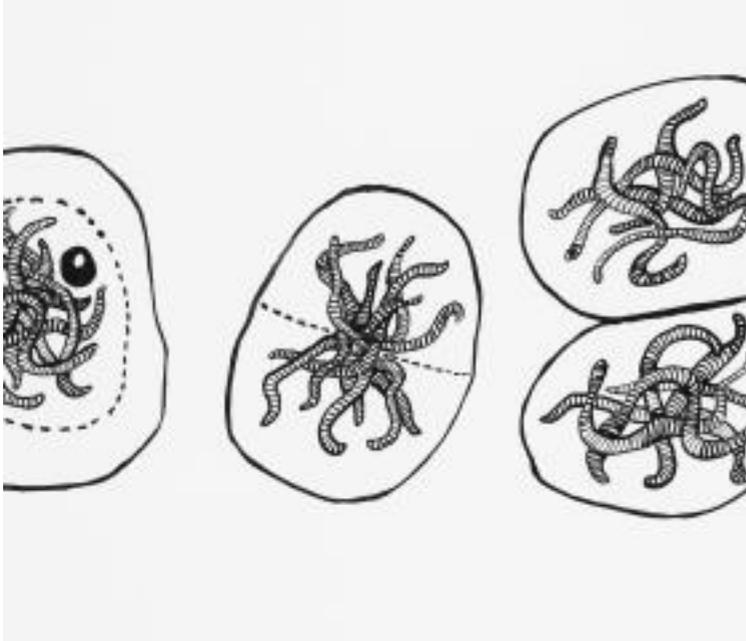


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# Perpetuating the species - spreading the message



Cells need other cells in order to function together as an organism. The same should happen with communities: whether you have a concrete message that you want humanity to know or not— for the sake of sustainable and integrated results of any activities, the single member needs to have the potential to document somehow and share the intentions, results and reflections of the actions performed.

In the Information Society where we live in, seems quite necessary to report on what we do, providing others with the channels and opportunities to make of our action a useful food for thought, piece of knowledge or inspiration for being replicated, adapted or responded. Therefore, the need of assuming the documentation stage as part of our action plan is as important and necessary as the ones mentioned on the previous chapters.

The point is: with your action you probably want to explain something or, if not, just to say *I don't have anything to say*. However, encouraging or critical, encrypted or obvious, the multi-layered message is there waiting for its receiver. Here are some simplified contemplation on the complex topic of communication; without any ambition of setting up a theory on social action communication or underlying concepts of the nature of Communication, we do want to share some of the reflections that have motivated *Masta* Collective since its origins to create this platform for sharing knowledge and experience on creative activism. And most of all, to give some hints on how to approach the documentation process of an action.

## **Who are you?**

Maybe we should have started with this earlier. But it felt necessary to talk about You in the chapter on "Spreading the Message". Even though nowadays, in the open-source-copy-paste-cut-copy century, actual authorship tends to dissolve in between the fragmented eternity of the message itself, there are still opportunities to play with the image of the sender. It might be that nobody believes anything but here are some questions that arise

- Do you want to undersign the action or do it anonymously?
- If You want to sign it, will you do it with your real name (the one written in your passport, if you have such, or the one that your community knows) or invent a pseudonym?
- Will the pseudonym be used for something else, or does it have a disposable function?
- What is the purpose and function of the constructed identity?
- What do you want the receivers to know about it? What don't you want to share?
- If you do want to choose your role, you can take time to answer these questions, or some diligent media worker can do it first and then the game can take some unexpected turns. Unless that is what you wanted.

## **Whom are you talking to?**

In the world of creative activism the targeting of the message varies from a "I don't care" attitude to very carefully planned actions; the very famous snowball effect can happen as well even if it was only an action conceived for your backyard. An old activist proverb says that "it's useful to know with whom you are aiming to speak: nobody, neighbors, your Twitter followers, government, the textile industry, or The Economist".

- Know their language - there are always better ways to approach newspapers than sending a press release, or for talking to neighbors by sticking notes on top of the other. It's good to know what kind of information channels the targeted receivers use as well as the most appropriate approach, tone and chosen language.
- Predict their agenda - even if you have to send that press release, it's better that it falls in the mailbox of the newspaper editor before he/ she has determined the tasks for the following day/week/month. A bit of rethinking and your action pops up in front of the receiver exactly at the place and time they are available for new input and looking for something.
- Have a Plan B - what if the wind blows away your beautiful banner, nobody re-tweets your revolutionary tweets or there is a sudden construction project at the announced "reclaim the street" intervention spot? Without getting paranoid, it's worth it to reconsider the scenario for error cases before getting there.

## **What do you want?**

This is easy - asking yourself "Why am I doing this? How does it make sense? What do I want to change/ not change with this?" Isn't necessarily wasted time spent on rhetorical moaning. Formulating an answer might be helpful in cases such as:

- Recruiting new collaborators and supporters.
- Confusing the representatives of some more serious institutions with tackling the human side of their personality.
- The sudden appearance of paparazzi.
- Gaining understanding and support from your own people.
- Fixing up your own motivation.
- Simply, documenting your working process for analyzing the experimented tactics, tools and methods.

Knowing your role, audience and purpose, makes it way more fun to choose from the various opportunities and communication tools available, be it a giant guerrilla moss graffiti on the wall opposite the headquarters of a forestry company, your face on a breaking news broadcast or the viral hysteria of sharing the pictures of activist avatars.

Till here we have compiled some ideas and posed some questions that may help you on creating your own documentation methodology and identifying your main communication needs in order to find the media tools you want to use. But what happens when you feel you don't fit in the established media universe? What if the media are not mere tools and can actually become spaces for action on itself? Then is when you are called to join the Media (Re)Conquest

**Visuals by:**

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