



CUBAN REVOLUTION

During the early 1990s, even as the Internet and e-commerce revolution swept through the United States (and the rest of the industrialized world), in nearby Cuba, the average citizen had still not heard of the Web. By 1996, however, Canadian Web entrepreneur Robert Sajo, who had taken up residence in Havana, managed to convince the government there to set up partnerships with foreign investors and support the development of various Web sites to promote the island's emerging tourism sector.

Nowadays, fellow Canadian businessman Enzo Ruberto is running Sajo's firm, ICC Corp., as well as Cubaweb, one of the more extensive and popular sites born of Sajo's entrepreneurship. Ruberto also oversees its sister sites: Quickcash, an online money-transfer site set up to circumvent the U.S. embargo, and a more recently established Amazon-style site, preciosijos.com, where Cuban exiles can order hard-to-find products and have them delivered to their island-bound relatives.

Ruberto credits Cuba's rigorous education system with making the country a choice location for launching a successful e-business. "The teams we put together are composed of extremely well-educated people, thanks to the Cuba's focus on free, top-level education, which is technically proficient and quite creative in its approach to teaching programming solutions," he says.

It's obvious that e-commerce in Cuba has benefited Ruberto and the clique of foreign entrepreneurs running e-businesses in Havana, but some might wonder what relevance

the Web has for the man on the street. Steve Marshall, who runs several tourism sites, including the popular GoCubaPlus.com, feels that travel sites like his are keeping Cuba's most vital industry, tourism, afloat and creating hard-to-come-by jobs for skilled workers.

Perhaps the most obvious benefit of Cuba's Web revolution is that the security-conscious government is starting to let its citizens have their own email accounts, which they can access through the postal service. That unto itself may not mean much to most Americans, but instant communication is monumental in a country accustomed to receiving six-month-old snailmail from America. | Vito Echevarria

wasn't surprised by the vibrancy of the colors and the abstract quality of the forms depicted.

"It's a way of seeing things randomly," says Arnold. "You don't get it in traditional photos, where shots can be repeated or duplicated." The Katzes' pinhole method gives each picture a different focus and sometimes results in bizarre colors, which add a certain abstract quality to the images. "There's less and less to think about with modern computerized cameras, so it's nice to have the ability to create something innovative," says the elder artist. | Chandra Johnson

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