In this paper we draw upon Goffman’s symbolic interactionism to analyze the ways in which new users in developing countries have used ICT to present and manage contradictory selves to different publics. In particular we show that the Amanajé, an indigenous group in the Amazon, presents themselves through online videos and websites as ideal Indians: innate forest stewards aiming to mitigate climate change and ensure the planet’s environmental sustainability. At the same time the Amanajé also uses a micro-economical deforestation computer model that presents the group as destructive cowboys: farmers and ranchers who are willing to develop by clearing their forests. We show that these two opposing goals, while contradictory, are necessary for the implementation of the UN-REDD project because in order to obtain carbon credits from avoided deforestation the project relies on a large amount of predicted deforestation, which in its turn, depend on the presentation of destructive development goals through the use of black boxed computer simulations. Yet, in order to sell these credits in a voluntary carbon market it is necessary for the Amanajé to present through the Internet a self-image that is attractive to corporate buyers willing to boost their eco-friendly profile. Based on this analysis we conclude that it is important to go beyond the notion that new ICT users in the global South are mere passive recipients of “black boxes” with goals and values inscribed by Northern engineers. In contrast the case of the Amanajé demonstrates that some Southern users are able to strategically inscribe and manage multiple and even contradictory self-images and development goals in ICT artefacts.

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