

Cyber Politics & Cyber Futures

DIGITAL CULTURE AND NEW READING PRACTICES
(COM2418)
FACULTY OF ARTS
SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES
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Cyber Politics & Cyber Futures

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Definitions

- ‘Cyber’
 - i Comes from ‘cybernetic’: “the science of communication and control theory that is concerned especially with the comparative study of automatic control systems (as the nervous system and brain and mechanical-electrical communication systems)” (“Cybernetic”)
 - i Note the correlation of brain and “mechanical-electrical communication systems”
 - i ‘Cyber’ basically means to do with computers and networks: but the significance of its use is the belief that organic and electronic systems are becoming intertwined – the ‘cyborg’
 - i Also note the original Greek source– “*kybernan* to steer, govern” (*ibid.*)
 - i The big debate is whether the electronic systems that humans depend upon more and more are going to ‘steer’ human society in particular ways
 - i Techno-determinism, the Frankenstein complex, neo-Luddism
- ‘Cyberpolitics’ and ‘Cyberfuture’ implies politics and future being formed by computer technologies

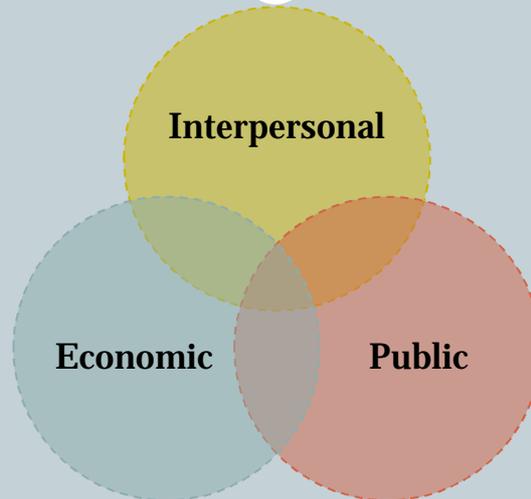
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Definitions

- **Politics: practices relating to social power**
 - i Wide and narrow definitions: does political action have to be conscious?
 - i Feminism: *the personal is political* – historical deconstruction of patriarchal concepts that confined politics to the public sphere
 - i ‘Politics’ operates in all aspects of society, simultaneously and intrinsically
 - ÷ This lecture: interpersonal, economic, public
 - à NB: this is a very rough categorisation, and there
- **Look at**
 1. How cyber-technologies affect power on an interpersonal level – conscious and non-conscious
 2. How cyber-technologies influence the relative power of economic institutions
 3. How cyber-technologies affect the field of public politics: i.e. the public sphere where actors consciously and expressedly compete to achieve power over the society as a whole

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Fields of Politics



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Cyberpolitics Interpersonal

- **Historical: household appliances 'liberated' women from lots of manual labour**
 - ⌞ But they were still expected to stay in the home...
- **Cybertechnologies render physical strength irrelevant – so one excuse for excluding women is removed**
 - ⌞ However. Wajcman details how technologies get re-interpreted to conform to patriarchal discourse
 - ⊕ e.g. Female artillery operators being classified as 'non-combat' (147)
- **Possibility of removal of face-to-face cues in interaction, which may make some difference**
- **Cybertechnologies being used for pornography (the most profitable internet business, and drives development of new technologies)**
 - ⌞ Why pornography so successful online? Product deliverable electronically (images), and disembodiment and anonymity create favourable environment
 - ⌞ Pornography is argued to be inherently oppressive to women
- **Ideals of beauty are communicated via media – computer imagery can create unrealistic standards**
 - ⌞ Reshaping of female body (*cf.* Geoghegan),...

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Cyberpolitics Interpersonal

- **Women are often tied to the home – this can reduce their access to education, legal protection and employment**
 - Cybertechnologies can mitigate this
 - However, with regards to ‘teleworking’, this means that women often get more work on top of what they do anyway (e.g. Ng)
- **In Bangladesh there is a well-known example of microcredit being used to provide women with loans, and they make a living by renting out mobile phones**
 - However, this is apparently no longer profitable for small scale operations, and it is shop owners and the telecom companies that are reaping the advantage (Verclas)
- **Alternative media means marginalised groups such as women, homosexuals, etc. are able to create networks of support and empowerment**
- **However, overall many other things need to change – not just the technology**

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Cyberpolitics Interpersonal

- **Could affect other hierarchies**
 - e.g. In household where the younger can use the technologies, and not the older, can lead to disempowering of elder people – especially relevant in e.g. Malaysia where seniority is important in terms of power
 - Use of tracking device in phone to track children...
- **Physically disabled people can communicate easier**
 - SMS for deaf people; Stephen Hawking, etc.
- **Workplace**
 - Telecommuting: those with better IT skills may gain advantages; those who are more able to work independently also
 - Reduction of face-to-face skills
- **The increased level of technologies seem to suggest that individuals can do more and more by themselves without needing social cooperation**
 - However, this just means other social skills will come to dominate over current ones – society stills remains central to the meaning given to interpersonal relations

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Cyberpolitics Economic

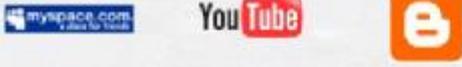
- **Where to place market-related activities?**
 - i Consumer boycott and lobbying by companies à conscious ‘public’ political action
- **The ‘free market’ is not apolitical**
 - i Supports a system of power that is normalised – like patriarchy
- **The hardware and software that enables the internet is mostly privately owned (e.g. Gutstein)**
- **Governments with less money and/or technological skills outsource internet management to companies**
 - i Filtering: proprietary technology, overreach and/or ineffective (Villeneuve)
- **Cultural imperialism operates via the expansion of markets and the homogenisation of consumers (Klein)**

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Cyberpolitics Economic

- **Colonisation of the internet and ‘Net neutrality’**
[YouTube video]
- **‘Net neutrality’: some proposals in America for providers to be able to charge for preferential treatment**
 - i Like a highway with different lanes for people who pay higher tolls
- **In 2007 opponents to net neutrality said:**
 - i “The Internet has done just fine without the help of regulators and politicians... The Internet is the modern frontier of innovation and economic development, and should remain free from regulation.”
 (“Critics Say If Net Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It.”)
- **Supporters argue that for the internet to benefit everyone, needs to be a ‘level playing field’**
à Use of similar discourse by the different groups: ‘open frontier’, ‘free’, ...

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 <p>Internet Video Includes all these and more, over 60 websites, including popular on-line email and instant messaging services</p>	<p>Internet Basic Service High Speed</p> <p>\$29⁹⁹ over 60 websites</p>
 <p>Includes more search engine options, over 200 websites in all!</p>	<p>Advanced Internet Service High Speed</p> <p>\$39⁹⁹ over 200 websites</p>
 <p>Be a publisher! Blog! Over 2000 website included in this package so you can see it all!</p>	<p>Blogger Internet Service High Speed</p> <p>\$49⁹⁹ over 2000 websites!</p>
<p><small>Full internet access available on request. Prices subject to change at any time. (Full Access does not include access to illegal materials)</small></p>	

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Cyberpolitics Economic

— Some examples already

- i Canada, 1995: ISP block access to website of trade union it was in dispute with (Geist)
- i USA, 2006: AOL claims “technical glitch” resulted in the blocking of emails campaigning against AOL policies (Johnson)

Cyberpolitics Economic

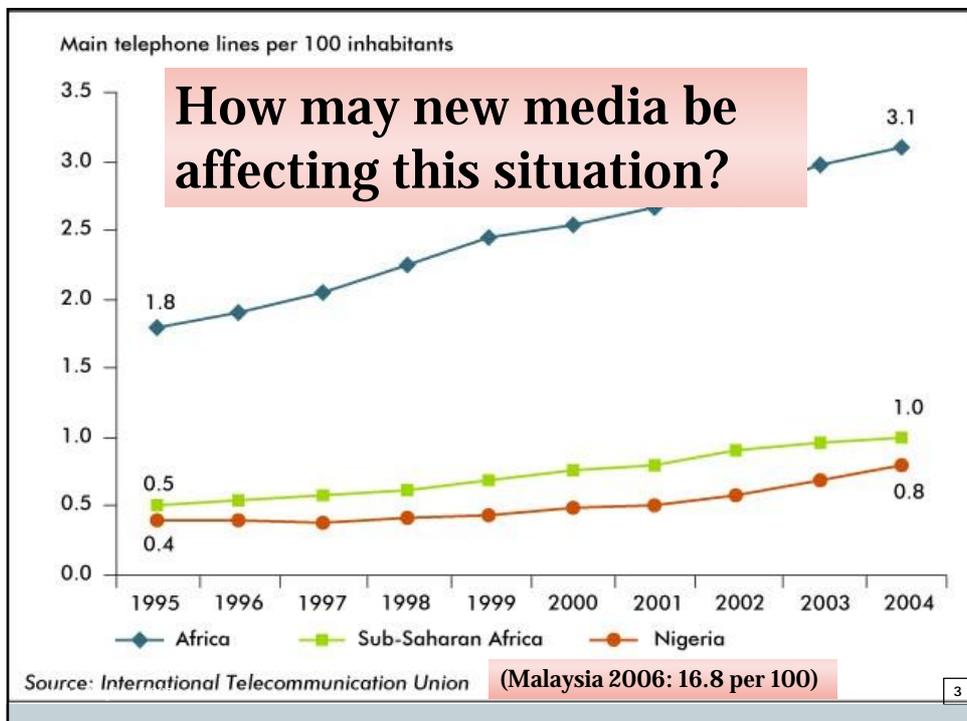
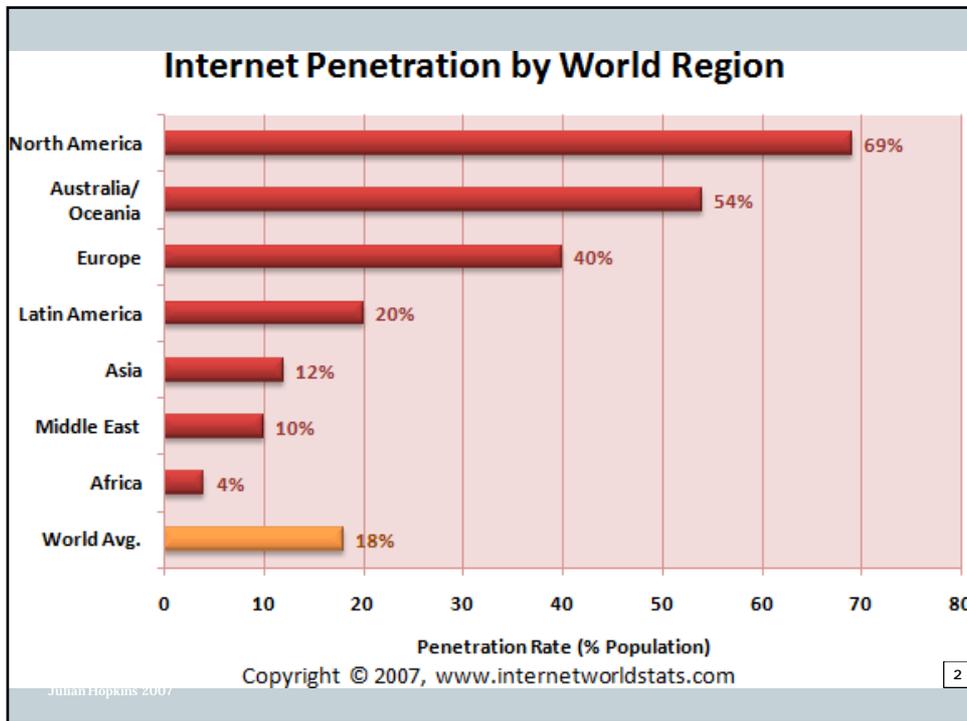
- **Intellectual property and the market**
 - ‡ Napster – closed down 2001; Bittorrent, etc.
 - ‡ Music industry pursuing file-sharing – e.g. US\$222,000 fine for sharing 24 songs via Kazaa (“Jury Penalises Music File-Sharer.”)
- **Microsoft as monopoly**
 - ‡ Netscape and bundling
- **As the importance of the internet as a social media grows, those in control of that media will also gain more power**

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Digital Divide

- à **Reality check: most people in the world do not have access to the internet, know how to use a computer, or have a mobile phone**
 - ‡ But people can still be affected even if they don't: e.g. blogs in Malaysia reported in the mainstream media (MSM); YouTube and Namewee; ...

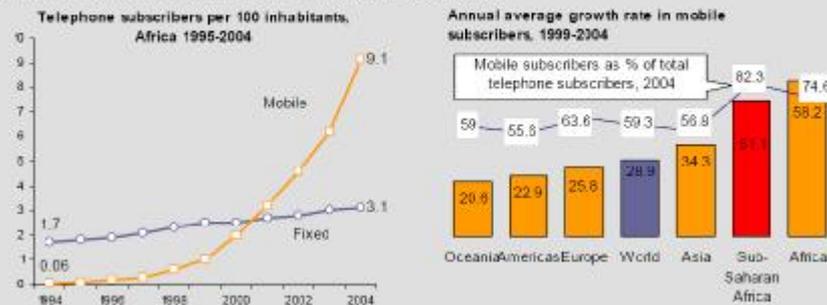
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“In Nigeria, Africa’s most populated country... mobile telephony has helped to increase total telephone penetration from 0.5 to 8 percent between 1999 and 2004” (Gray)

Figure 3.1: Mobile in Africa

Mobile and fixed telephone subscribers per 100 inhabitants in Africa, 1995-2004 (left) and annual average percentage growth in mobile network subscribers, 1999-2004, world regions (right)



Source: ITU World Telecommunication Indicators Database. Julian Hopkins 2007

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Digital Divide

- But people can still be affected even if they don’t have the internet
 - ⌋ Blogs in Malaysia reported in the mainstream media (MSM); YouTube and Namewee; ...
- Eventually, most people will have some access
 - ⌋ But there will probably always be a divide between the have and have-nots
- Open Source is important for increasing access to software

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Cyberpolitics Public

- Can see a lot more use and effect of cybertechnologies in the public political arena
- Used to support as well as to oppose existing power structures
 - i American Democratic Presidential candidates debated on YouTube, and are seeking to make their presence felt online in various ways

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Cyberpolitics Public

Second Life

- “IBM owns about 50 virtual facilities in Second Life which it uses for research, induction of new employees, and meetings. About 5000 of its employees work or operate in a number of virtual worlds including Second Life... the protesters' intention [is] to stage peaceful demonstrations at each of the IBM facilities in Second Life, they would also be appearing in other public areas of the virtual world - just in case IBM effected a virtual lock out.” (Hutcheon)



IBM employee and union representative David Barillari's Second Life avatar Barillo Kohnke, wears the protest t-shirt.

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facebook Profile Friends Networks Inbox (1)

Search

Applications edit

PHOTOS GROUPS EVENTS Super Wall Chat

View More Photos of Hillary (55)

Send Hillary a Message

Support The Pullout

Invite Hillary to a Cause

Write on Hillary's Supervill

Suggesters

41,878 Supporters See All

Catie Galtner

Debra Dean

Megan Frost

Wendy Miller

Josiah Penn

Yvonne Hunkler

Photos

4 of 36 photos See All

Hillary Clinton

Political Activist

US Politics

October 26, 1947

Decision 2008

Political Party

President

Democratic Party

Information

Current Office

Current Position: Senator

Current State: PA

Current Party: Democratic Party

Contact Info

Email: Hillary Clinton@electors.facebook.com

Website: http://www.hillaryclinton.com

Personal Info

About Me: I was raised in a middle-class family in the middle of America. From that classic suburban childhood in Park Ridge, Illinois, I went on to become one of America's foremost advocates for children and families; an attorney who voted one of the most influential in America; a First Lady of Arkansas who helped transform the suburbs; a bestselling author; a First Lady for America who helped transform that role; becoming a champion for health care and education at home and a champion of women's rights and human rights around the world.

http://www.hillaryclinton.com/about/

Education

Education Info

Colleges: Wellesley College '68, York-Lynn School '73

YouTube Dodge

By user HillaryClintonDodge

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Disconnected is the frustration of over a decade of failed experience in online advertising and search and services.

Find out more...

BannerConnect
Advertising without boundaries

Hillary Havoc

Application By: Hillary Havoc

Description: Tell Hillary Clinton what you really think about her! Flex Hillary and show it to your profile. Make a political statement or just have fun. This app uses the technology provided by Facebook to let your imagination come to Facebook!

Users: Public

Application Description

Hillary Clinton

Name: Hillary Clinton

Network: US Politics

Send Message

Web Friends

Support The Pullout

PHOTOS

ABC= Anybody But Clinton

Group: ABC= Anybody But Clinton

Network: Global

Size: 1,758 members

Type: Common Interest - Politics

New: 14 More Members, 2 Wall Posts

Network: News and Description

Web Group

Join Group

ABC!!! Anyone But Clinton in 2008

Group: ABC!!! Anyone But Clinton in 2008

Network: Global

Size: 1,851 members

Type: Common Interest - Politics

New: 12 More Members

Network: News and Description

Web Group

Join Group

ABC= Anyone But Clinton

Group: ABC= Anyone But Clinton

Network: Global

Size: 130 members

Type: Common Interest - Politics

New: 16 More Members, 2 Wall Posts

Network: News and Description

Web Group

Join Group

ABC= Anyone But Hillary

Group: ABC= Anyone But Hillary

Network: Global

Size: 1,081 members

Type: Common Interest - Politics

New: 5 More Members

Network: News and Description

Web Group

Join Group

7



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Cyberpolitics Public

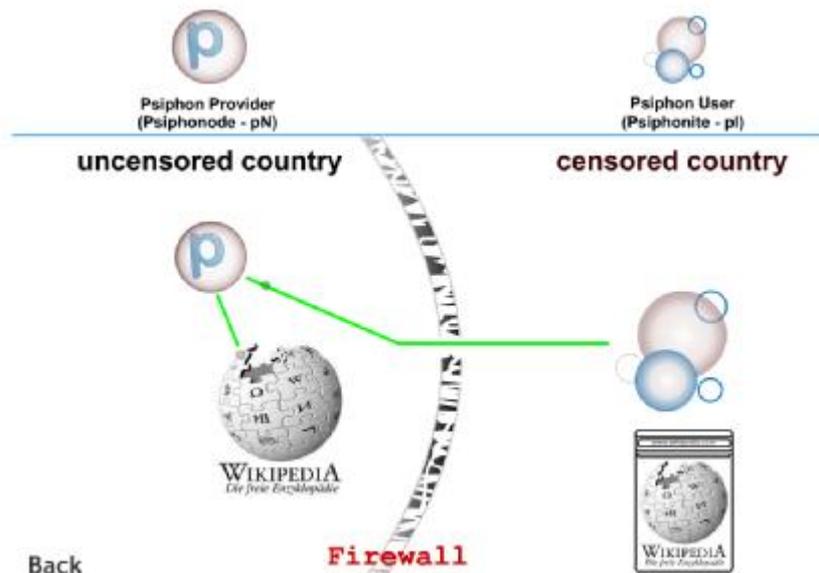


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China

- ISPs need to keep on users for 60 days and responsible to ensure no illegal material is hosted (Open Net Initiative 3)
- Cybercafes need to note users' identity, and keep records for 60 days (*ibid.* 3)
- Proposal to require that all users of blogs to record their identity
- Constant online presence of 'Internet police' Jingjing and Chacha
 - ! Many laws used: subversion, etc.
- Two 'backbone' operators are the gateway to outside China (*ibid.* 5)

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“Even if the psiphon website is blocked it does not affect psiphon's distribution model. psiphon is completely decentralized; each psiphonode is independent of all others. The distribution of access to personal psiphon servers is based on social networks. Each psiphonode administrator grows his/her private network based on social relations of trust.” (psiphon)

Cyberpolitics Public



Singapore

- **George – “smart authoritarian regime” in Singapore**
 - i Allows more freedom online than offline; no political site blocked from 1996-1997
 - i Recent elections: political parties not allowed to use online petitions, or audio/video features
 - i Although internet-specific legislation exists, other used – defamation, sedition, etc. (record: <http://calibratedcoercion.wordpress.com/>)
- **Shariff: online forum/website in provides a contesting voice for the Malay minority in Singapore**
 - i Website had to register as political, declare members; alternative websites promoted by authorities
 - i State intimidation and surveillance of those who ran the website
- **Singapore blocks 100 “symbolic” sites (George): they have the technology to block any site**

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Cyberpolitics Public



Malaysia

- **Malaysiakini, alternative online news provider, came out of the 1997-8 socio-economic crisis**
 - i Moved to subscriber model when advertisers withdrew due to political concerns (Tong)
 - i Dr. Mahathir, previous critic, also used it to bypass state control of MSM
- **Postill, documents the use of internet and mobile telephony in local disputes in Subang Jaya**
- **Blogs: leading blogger Jeff Ooi been around since 2003 (www.screenshots.com)**
 - i Malaysia Today, hosted by Raja Petra Kamaruddin, archives since 2004 (<http://malaysia-today.net/>)

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Cyberpolitics Public



Malaysia

- In 2007 blogs became the centre of a number of well-publicised government criticisms
 - ‡ Have proved to be a significant alternative media source
 - ‡ ‘Watchdog’ of MSM – the SoPo blogging format is frequently one of comments on news items
- Nat Tan incident: blogger arrested, a vigil organised via blogs and handphone
 - ‡ Sister posted information in real time with a phone; films posted online

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Cyberpolitics Public



Burma

- Bloggers use software and websites to evade government control (Holmes)
- Computers with internet connection need to be registered
- Recent demonstrations
 - ‡ Mobile phone coverage blacked out in some areas
 - ‡ People with mobile phones and/or cameras targeted
 - ‡ Also used those pictures to trace demonstrators etc.
- Portable media devices helps to publicise events – but more is needed to take power from the regime

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Cyberpolitics Public

- **Most/all countries have controls over online activities**
 - i Religious, political, commercial and moral reasons
- **Some may have laws specific to the internet, others use pre-existing laws**
- **The image of the internet as an uncontrolled arena is not accurate**
 - i Depends on relative technical skills of actors involved

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Cyberpolitics

- **Cybertechnologies will affect the ways in which power is contested**
 - But how it can be used depends on many factors
 - How it affects the relative balance of power is important
- **Potential for decentralising**
- **Importance of commercial interests controlling cybertechnologies**

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Cyberfutures



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Cyberfutures Imagining the future

- **Politics is about the present – the politician seeks to shape the future by manipulating the present**
 - ‡ Ultimately, politicians rarely have as much control over the future as they (and we) would like to think
- **To have an idea of the future we can look at historical models and present trends**
 - ‡ Ultimately, however, it is all speculation

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Cyberfutures Imagining the future

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us."

-- Western Union internal memo, 1876.

‡ **Technology gets better**

"Aeroplanes are interesting toys but of no military value."

-- Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Supérieure de Guerre. [c. 1914]

‡ **Military drives technology**

"The wireless music box has no imaginable commercial value. Who would pay for a message sent to nobody in particular?"

-- David Sarnoff's associates in response to his urgings for investment in the radio in the 1920's.

‡ **Importance of commercial considerations**

"Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?"

-- H.M. Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927.

‡ **Paradigms**

"So we went to Atari and said, 'Hey, we've got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, and what do you think about funding us? Or we'll give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, we'll come work for you.' And they said, 'No.' So, then we went to Hewlett-Packard, and they said 'Hey, we don't need you. You haven't got through college yet,'"

-- Apple Computer Inc.. founder Steve Jobs on attempts to get Atari and H-P interested in his and Steve Wozniak's personal computer.

‡ **Established hierarchies can impede change**

(all quotes: Sprex)

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Cyberfutures

Imagining the future

- “Rearview mirrorism” (McLuhan): people see the future and the present through the lens of the past – inevitable
- Teleology (*telos* = ‘goal’)
 - ! Looking back, it seems obvious that everything was leading to this point – but this does not mean that there is an equally definite point in the future that will be arrived at
- However, having an awareness of change may influence change
 - ! In a social environment where ‘the future’ is embraced as a positive value, symbolic capital can be accumulated by associations with ‘the future’

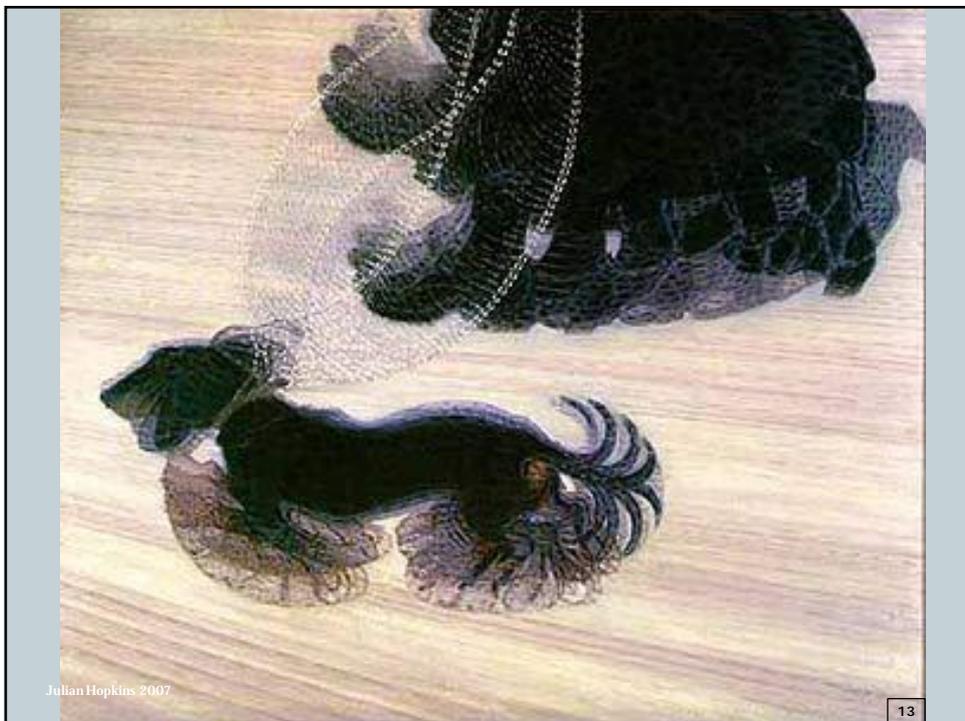
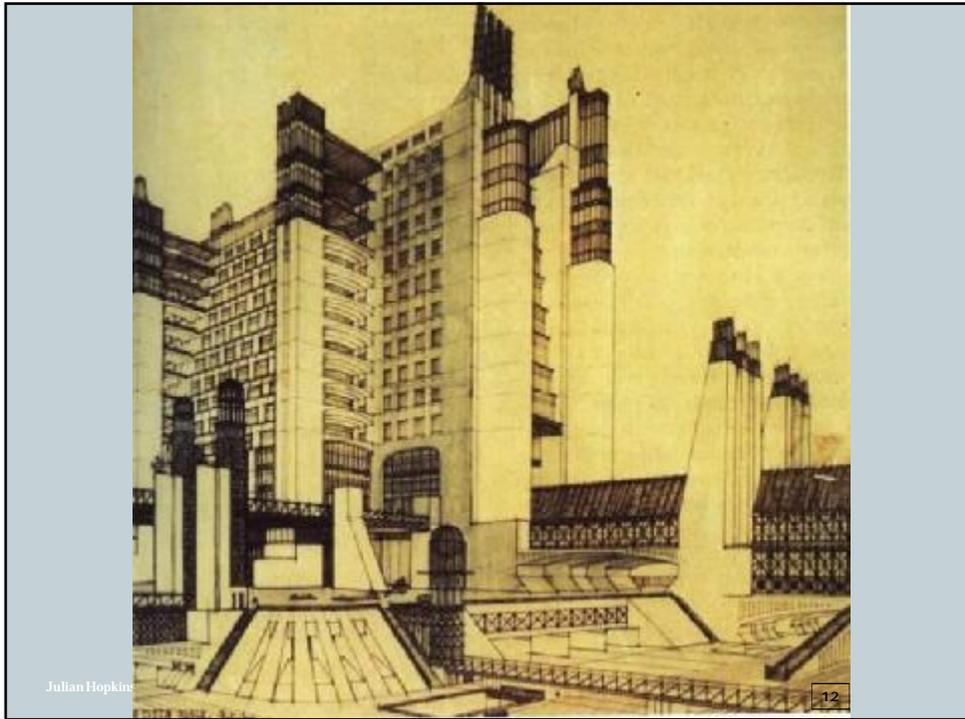
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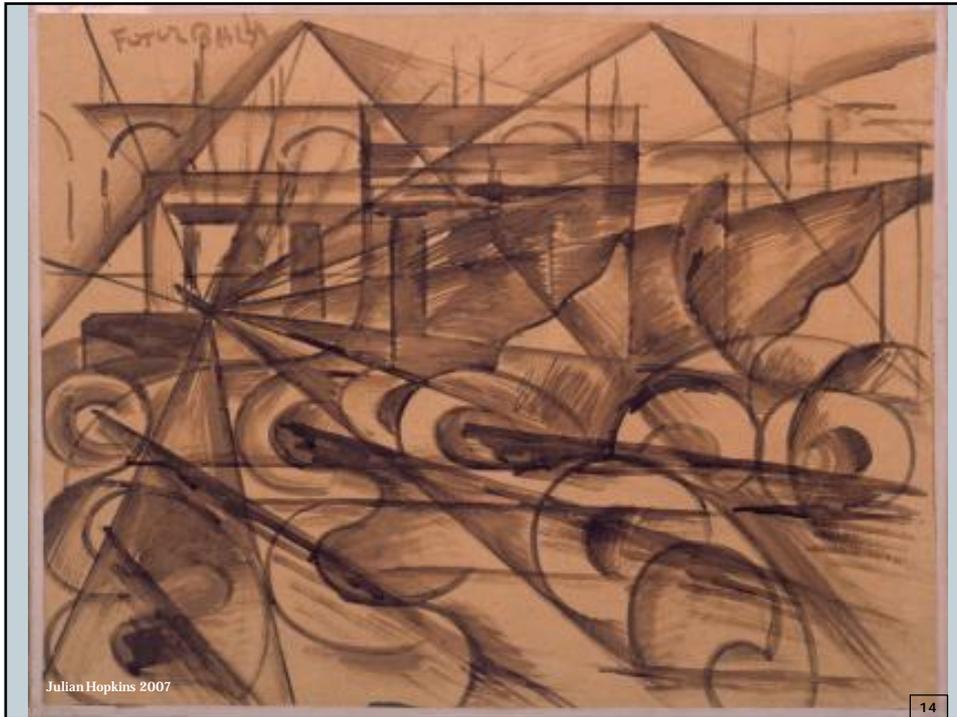
Cyberfutures

Imagining the future

- Historical parallel: futurism of the early 20th century
 - ! Artistic movement: “Being a Futurist meant pursuing the perpetual regeneration of all things... seeking the utmost integration of human life with the logic of becoming.” (Lista 10)
 - ! “We declare that the splendour of the world has enriched itself with a new beauty: the beauty of speed.” (Marinetti, “The Manifesto of Futurism” qtd. in Lista 30; trans. by Hopkins)
 - ! “conquer the seemingly unconquerable hostility that separates out human flesh from the metal of motors” (Marinetti qtd. in Humphreys 39-40)

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Cyberfutures Imagining the Future

- The ‘Space Race’ of the 60’s also saw an aesthetic and discursive embracing of the ‘modern’
 - McLuhan: “We’re the first culture in the history of the world that ever regarded innovation as a friendly act.” ([1971] qtd. in Benedetti & DeHart 193)
 - May not be accurate in terms of uniqueness, but reflects the value placed on all things new at the time
- An embracing of the ‘future’ as symbolic capital can perhaps accelerate change
 - e.g. End 20th century, ‘dot.com’ bubble; resulted in over capacity of fibre optic cables, but this enabled faster development of worldwide networks etc. (e.g. “The End of the Fibre Optic Cable Boom...”)
- Nowadays obtaining the latest software upgrade or handphone model is often seen as an end in itself; built-in obsolescence
 - Do I really need Office 2007?

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Cyberfutures Imagining the Future

- We cannot predict the future (duh) but we live in an age where technological change is valued for political, social and economic purposes

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Cyber Futures Netopia & Dystopia

- Rheingold described the internet as an ‘open frontier’
 - i “Networks ... use many possible paths to distribute information from any link to any other, and are self-regulated through flat governance hierarchies and distributed power... [possibly] the newest major social organizational form, after tribes, hierarchies, and markets.” (Rheingold 163)
 - i “Putting cameras and high-speed Net connections into telephones... moves blogging to the streets. By the time this book is published [2002], I’m confident that street bloggers will have constructed a world-wide culture.” (Rheingold 169)
- Katz:
 - i Predicts the rise of the “netizen”, and “postpolitics and the birth of the Digital Nation”.
 - i “The world's information is being liberated, and so, as a consequence, are we.”

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Cyber Futures Netopia & Dystopia

- Prevalence of databases in western society “...has a discursive effect...[that with other cultural technologies is] slowly erecting the basis of a culture that is decidedly different from the modern.” (Poster 90-1)
- Manovich (45-8) speaks of “cultural transcoding”: the underlying “computer layer” of computers, having its own inherent driving logic, interacts with the “cultural layer”
 - i “the result of this composite is a new computer culture – a blend of human and computer meanings, of traditional ways in which human culture modelled the world and the computer’s own means of representing it.” (46)
 - ÷ à debateable here: why is the ‘new’ culture a ‘computer’ culture?

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Cyber Futures Netopia & Dystopia

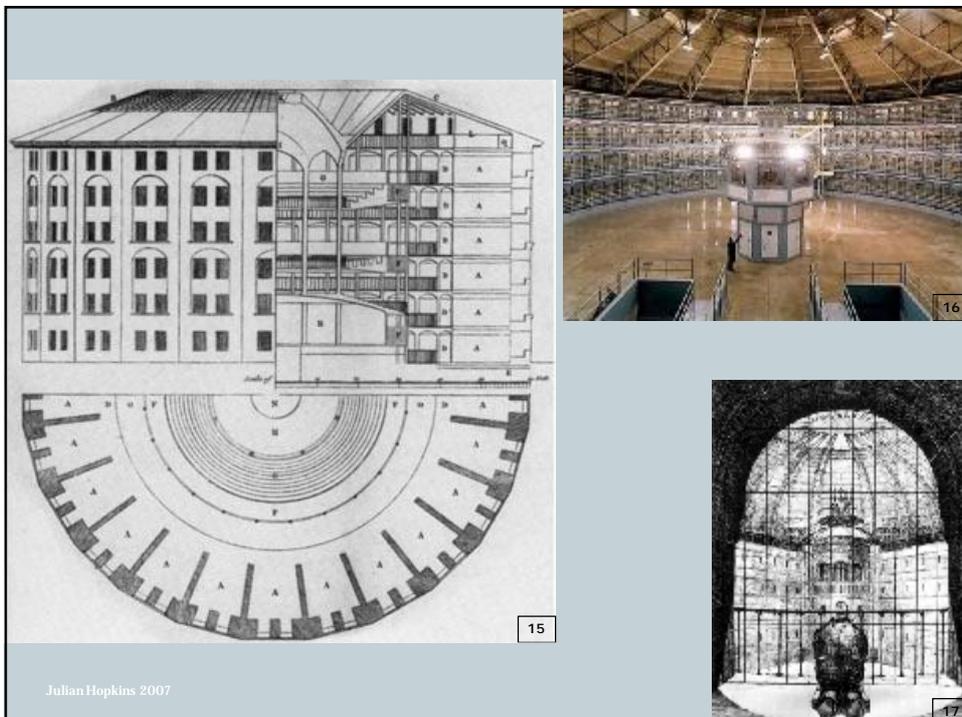
- Gutstein: “e-con” – the internet is increasing surveillance possibilities and extending the reach of corporations
 - i Canadian government (in 1999) is “commercialising public information resources” (Gutstein 5) – e.g. libraries, government databases; danger of undermining democracy
 - i “The reality is that we are still in the same corporate-dominated society, only this time the domination is greater because of the surveillance capabilities of the computer networks.” (Gutstein 283).
- Sardar: “We are thus set to move from the physical colonisation of the Other to virtual colonisation of everything by virtual capitalism... Virtual colonisation is the new dimension of European colonialism” (Sardar 33)

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Cyberfutures Surveillance and Panopticon

- “new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example: and that, to a degree equally without example” (Bentham 31)
 - The prisoner never knows when s/he is under observation, therefore acts as if s/he always is à self-discipline

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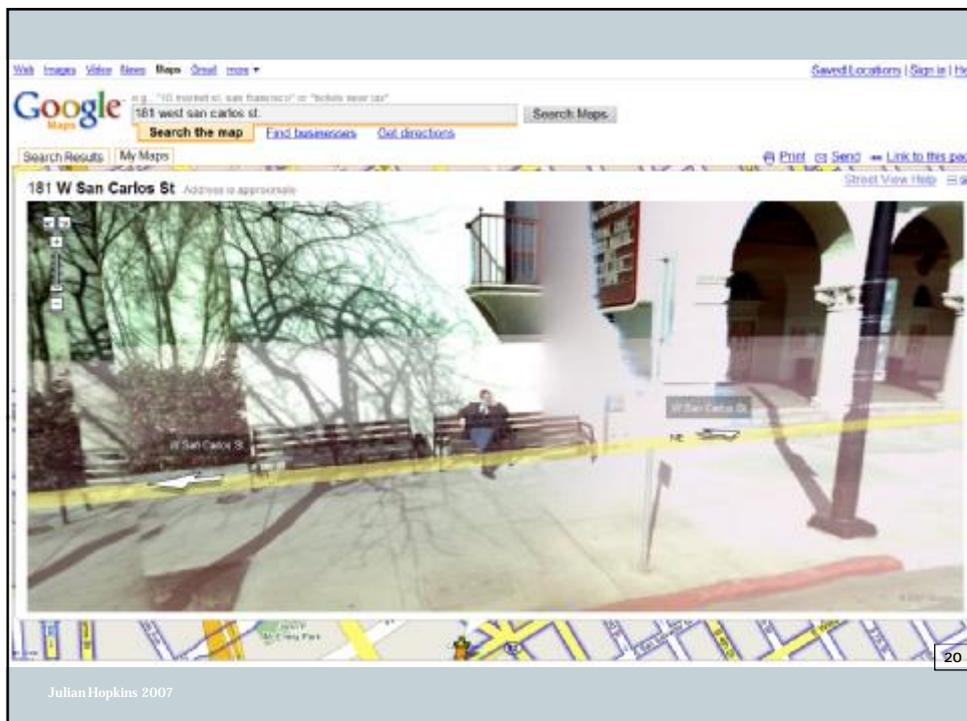
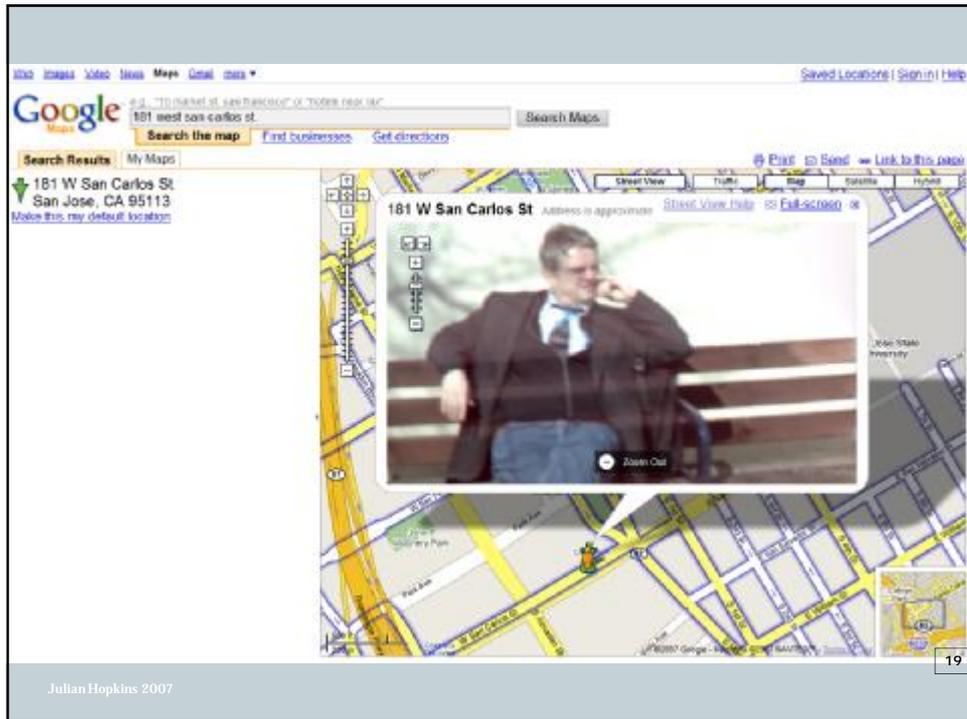


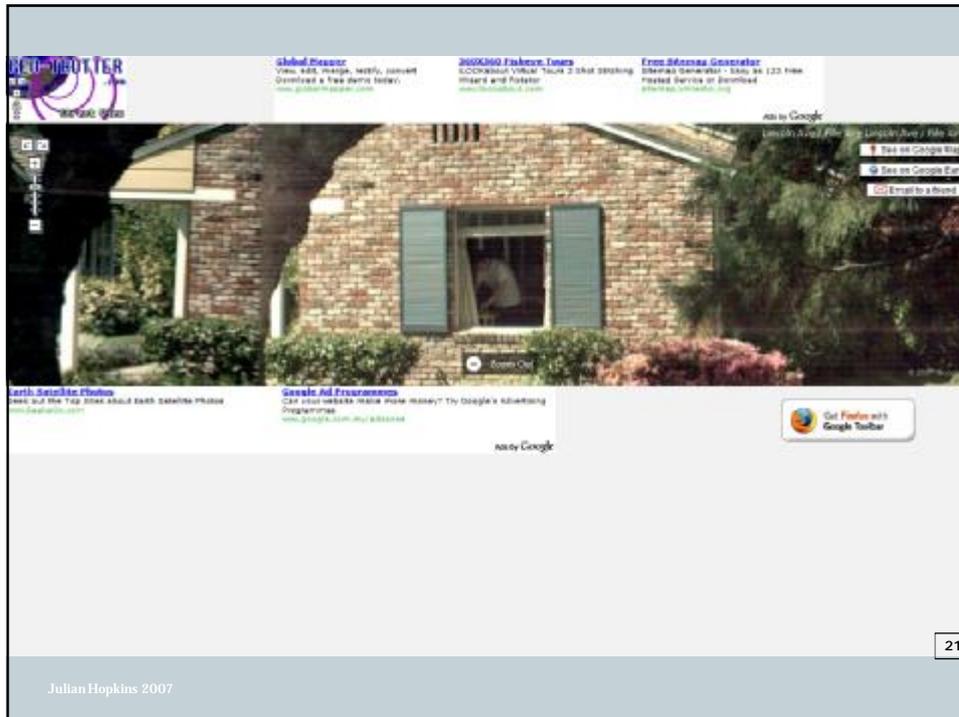
Cyberfutures Surveillance and Panopticon

- Knowing that our emails, our blogs, may be retrieved may affect our communicative practices
- Public spaces under surveillance; CCTV
 - Google World Street View – the technology exists
 - Face recognition software – the crowd cannot hide you
 - Satellite imaging – you cannot run away

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Cyberfutures Surveillance and Panopticon

- What are the possible future trends that respond to this?
- Two extremes: individual isolation or complete collectivism
- New interpretations of public and private

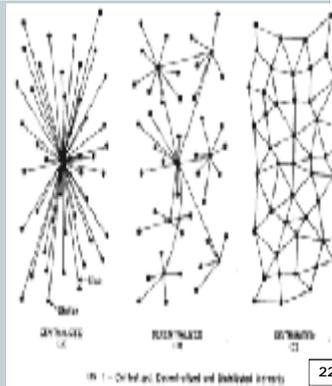
Cyber Futures Networks: Society

- **Wellman *et al.* discuss the potential for “networked individualism”**
 - ⌚ “changing towards networked societies where boundaries are more permeable, interactions are with diverse others, linkages switch between multiple networks, and hierarchies are flatter and more recursive... the Internet and other new communication technology are helping each individual to personalize his or her own community... a complex, fundamental transformation in the nature of community.” (*ibid.*)
- **However, they also note the significance of offline cultural differences**
 - ⌚ “Personal encounters are the predominant mode of communication among Catalans [in Spain]... Telephoning is of secondary importance. The Internet is hardly ever used except to communicate with those few friends who live in other countries...” (*ibid.*)

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Cyberfutures Networks: Mesh

- **The technological basis of the internet is decentralisation**
 - ⌚ Mesh: means being able to connect via different nodes
- **Terranet – mobile phones using each other as nodes in a mesh network (“Mobile System Promises Free Calls.”)**
 - ⌚ Free calls, no centralised control possible (apart from airborne jamming or something)
- **Fon – by allowing a small amount of your fixed-line broadband connection to be accessed wirelessly by other subscribers, accessibility is expanded (“Wi-fi sharing plan launched in UK”)**
 - ⌚ Ultimately centralised to some extent
- **One Laptop per Child**
 - ⌚ Initiative to bring IT technologies to developing countries
 - ⌚ Uses wireless mesh to connect laptops



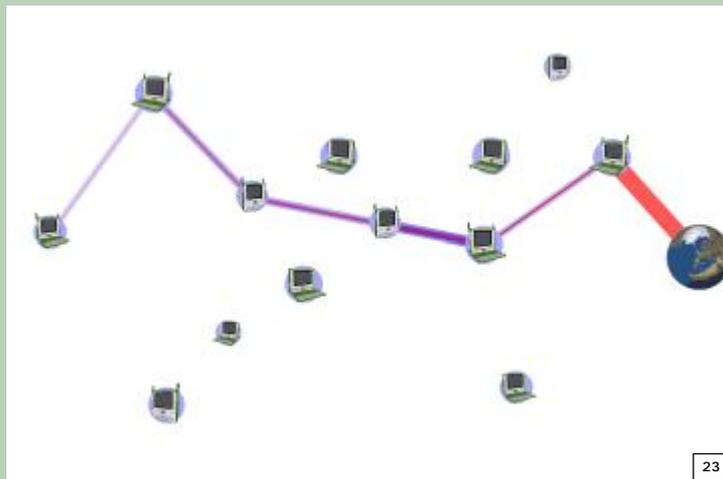
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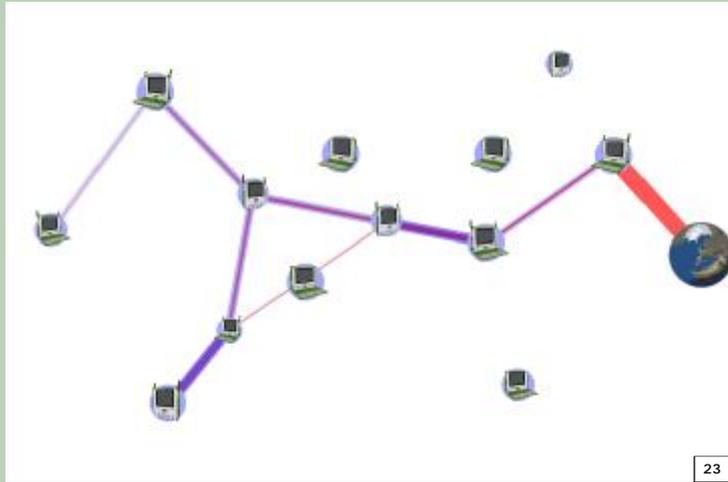
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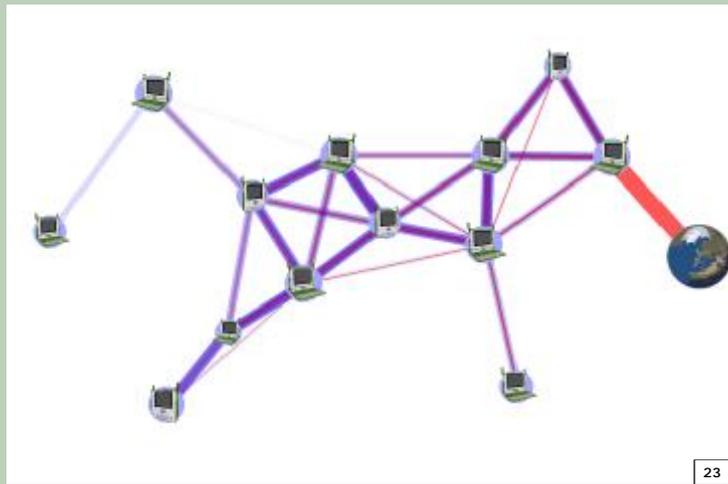


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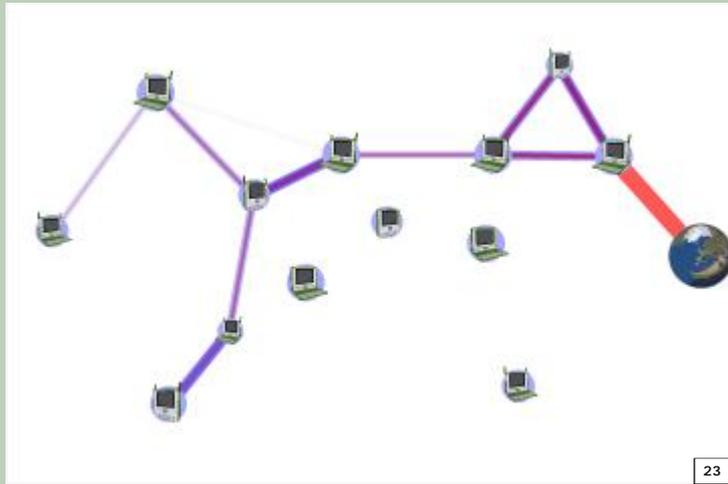
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Cyberfutures Networks: Mesh

- Depending on available technology and cultural patterns, communication exchange can avoid hierarchies of control that centralise it

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Cyberfutures Networks: Multiple

- Not necessary to have one ‘internet’
- Possible creation of national networks, with only privileged people having direct access internationally
 - ⌋ Response to ‘cyberterrorism’ or economic competition
- Probable continued predominance of commercial control of the internet, etc.
- Creation of privileged access SNS: e.g. a ‘Facebook’ only for people of particular groups – e.g. Hollywood actors, millionaires
 - ⌋ ‘By invitation only’: like exclusive social clubs, golf clubs

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Cyberfutures Virtual reality: cyborg life in ‘The Matrix’?

- It is possible that brains could all be wired into one big network, and bodies become mostly irrelevant – will it happen?
 - ⌋ Biological needs: food and reproduction
 - ⌋ Ecology and environment: the current socio-economic system is not sustainable for the whole world

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Cyberfutures

Virtual reality: cyborg life in “The Matrix”?

- **Can all social needs be met via electronic means?**
Maybe, social systems are very flexible
 - Our sense of identity may change as we integrate the potentials of media-as-extension into our understanding of the world
 - How we relate to each other affects how we construct our sense of identity
- **Digital cyborgs: our social identity becoming mediated via digital extensions**
 - e.g. Facebook profile
 - But flesh and blood is assumed to be behind it

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Second Life | The Marketplace - Opera

File Edit View Bookmarks Widgets Feeds Tools Help

New Tab Second Life | The Marketplace

http://secondlife.com/whats/marketplace.php

WELCOME TO SECOND LIFE

The World

- Create an Avatar
- Explore
- Meet People
- Own Virtual Land
- Have Fun

The Creators

- Create Anything
- Building
- Scripting

The Marketplace

- Economy
- Economy Graphs
- Economic Statistics
- Linden Market Data
- Business Opportunities
- IP Rights

Memberships & Pricing

- Membership Plans
- Land Pricing & Use Fees

PAGE

The Marketplace

Make real money in a virtual world. That's right, real money.

Here's how it works:

- Second Life has a fully-integrated economy architectured to reward risk, innovation, and craftsmanship.
- Residents create their own virtual goods and services. Because residents retain the IP rights of their creations, they are able to sell them at various in-world venues.
- Businesses succeed by the ingenuity, artistic ability, entrepreneurial acumen, and good reputation of their owners.
- Residents who have amassed lots of Linden Dollars are matched with residents who want to buy Linden Dollars at LindenX (our official Linden Dollar exchange), or at other unaffiliated third-party exchanges.
- Second Life's real estate market provides opportunities for Residents to establish their own communities and business locations. See Land Pricing & Use Fees for details.

JOIN NOW

Free Basic Membership

Resident Referral

Tell your friends about Second Life.

Islands

Buy your own island today!

Got Questions?

Get the answers from our support channels!

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

CLICK HERE FOR SPECIAL OFFERS ON HEADSETS FOR RESIDENTS!

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Cyberfutures

Cyborg consumer: commoditisation of the self

- **Social interaction via cybertechnologies will increase**
 - ⌋ Even within the house – e.g. IM
- **If these cybertechnologies are commercialised – how does this affect identity construction?**
- **Our means of relating to others, and constructing ourselves – our performances – will be mediated through a commercialised discourse**
 - ⌋ 'I am what I consume'
 - ⌋ Celebrities, blogs, reality shows: the 'commoditisation of the self'
- **'Viral marketing': leveraging the automation of interpersonal ties to promote products**
 - ⌋ People interact via commercial messages; commercial entities take on mediating role
 - ⊕ e.g. Proton video

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Cyberfutures

Cyborg

- **Use of 'biochips'**
 - ⌋ Medical records, 'IC card', criminal record, etc.
- **Wearable computers**
 - ⌋ Thought-activated technology, nano-technology, etc.

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Conclusions

- Central question: is 'the media the message'?
 - ı Does a particular media change human society by virtue of some intrinsic properties?
 - à I think: potential is there, but many other factors matter too
- There is a greater scope for individual isolation, and more formal interaction (shopping, bureaucratic processes) will be done via automated processes
 - ı Reduction of the importance of face-to-face interaction, and/or it becomes something intimate
- More personalised social networks
- Changing conceptions of public vs. private
- As the governments catch up with the technical aspects of the internet, they will be able to control it more and more
- Commercialisation likely to extend into more fields of social interaction
- Change tends to be slower than people think
 - ı Unlikely that power differences disappear – the more powerful will always be the first to benefit from advantages, and changes will tend to benefit them

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- Watch PBS documentary on Net Neutrality
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