Personal Learning Environments? or Society’s Learning Environment?

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Where’s This?
What’s This?
Remember This 2006 Headline?

Good news! Black hole won't destroy Earth

Fears raised collider would create black holes that could swallow planet
Birth of the Web

• From an underground nuclear bunker on the Swiss border, something did escape
• In 1989 the Web took over the academia, industry and the world
Expansion of the Web

• The Web spread the conditions of its initial creation throughout the whole of society as it underwent an initial inflationary phase.

• The academy
  – government patronage
  – large-scale co-operation
  – sharing of intellectual property
The development of society as a whole (nuanced and structured and refined) is inextricably related to the technology of information provision, consumption and dissemination (e.g. writing, reading, printing, education). *Different parts of society have different objectives and hence incompatible Web requirements, e.g. openness, security, transparency, privacy.*
## Less successful Webs from history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>System</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Real</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Important Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>Reuters</td>
<td>Professional, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>News &amp; stock information (originally carrier pigeon and subsequently telegraph)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Institution</td>
<td>Mundaneum</td>
<td>Public, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Based on indexing technology (the library card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Memex</td>
<td>Scholarly, individual,</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Aimed at Scientists and Technologists in WWII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Xanadu</td>
<td>Public, decentralised</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Focused on DRM, reuse and writing for “creatives”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>CEEFAX</td>
<td>Public, national, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Broadcast, linked, not participatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Minitel</td>
<td>Public, national, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Commercial services and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy (CS &amp; HEP)</td>
<td>FTP / Archie /</td>
<td>Public, decentralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Downloaded resources (papers, reports) to hard drives and printed them on LaserWriters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anarchie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>Hypercard,</td>
<td>Private, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Personal applications, sometimes tied to multimedia resources on CDROMs / video disks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HyperTIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy (HEP)</td>
<td>WWW</td>
<td>Public, global, decentralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Universal naming, linking, interoperability, participative. However no writing, no indexing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy (CS)</td>
<td>Microcosm</td>
<td>Private, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Sophisticated linking and openness for personal information stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy (CS)</td>
<td>HyperG</td>
<td>Public, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Extension of Web for with support for writing, indexing and consistency management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>AOL, CompuServ</td>
<td>Public, centralised</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Dialup access to email, forums, chat rooms and information resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Web is a Performance…

The middle space represents the activity of individuals (potentially acting in concert) who create interlinked resources that both reflect and reinforce the interlinkedness of society and social (economic, legal, personal) interaction.

...and a record of that performance.
Performing on the Web

- It’s something we do, not a product we buy
  - ✗ Information and Communication Technology
  - ✓ Informing and Communicating Technology

Wikipedia – new knowledge is edited and managed on the web through processes that are discussed and managed through the Web. Wikipedia only exists because of the wikipedia community; the wikipedia community only exists because of the Web. Both are a linked resource with an emerging set of values and standards.

Academia – new knowledge is created privately and sometimes presented on the Web. Centuries-old processes and values pre-exist in academic organisations and are re-interpreted for the prevailing technology.

Different parts of society have different needs to communicate for different ends.
PLE: New Kind of Performance?

• Learning as a human modality:
  – Enquiry, discovery, guidance, evaluation, certification

• What kinds of Web users are there?
  – Web 1.0: readers
  – Web 2.0: readers and content providers
  – Web 3.0: software agents & user-oriented apps
  – Wikipedia: readers, contributors, editors
  – Now: readers, commenters, content providers, commentators
Personal Learning or Society Learning

• Not just individuals trying to increase their own cognitive competency in order to be able to improve their CV

• Now society needs to do this  
  – solving energy, climate, water

• Does the PLE agenda offer a new kind of web performance

• Learning as a human modality:  
  – Enquiry, discovery, guidance, evaluation, certification
Discussion?
Cyborgs

- Social theorist Donna Haraway emphasises the role that technology plays in creating our humanity
- Union of human & technology makes a new kind of human
  – What sort of thing is human + smartphone?

The web is not a thing acting alone. Computers cause nothing, but humans and computers together remake worlds.

*paraphasing Donna Haraway, Social Theorist*
Cyborgs in the Pub

Bloom’s Taxonomy

- Educational outcomes? or Cognitive competencies?
- Everything is built on knowledge/recall
- The only thing the Web provides is knowledge/recall
Discussion

• What new Web features (services?) do we need

• To Transform **Personal Reading** into **Personal Learning**