



# The Internet: Social Effects

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**History of Information 103**

**Geoff Nunberg**

**April 24, 2014**



# The Internet: Social Effects Dimensions

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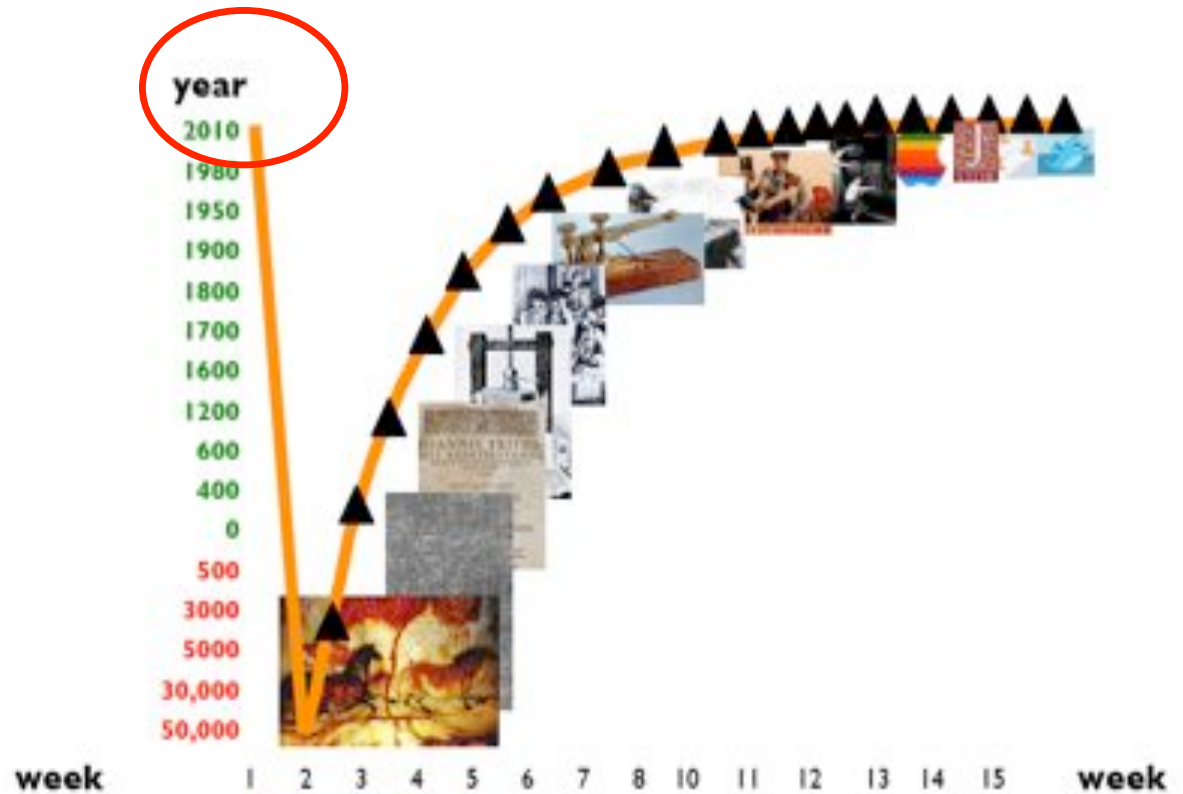
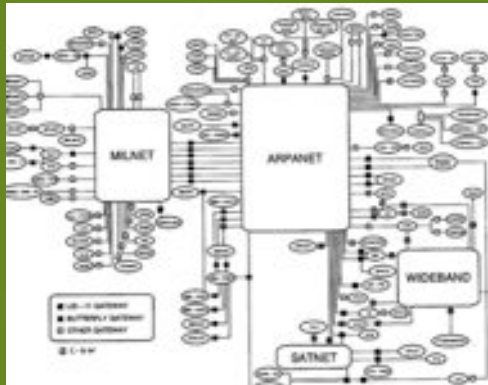
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# Where We Are





## Itinerary, 4/24

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The rise of "virtual community"

The interpenetration of online & off

Politics, porn, and pollution



# Cyberspace: The New Jerusalem

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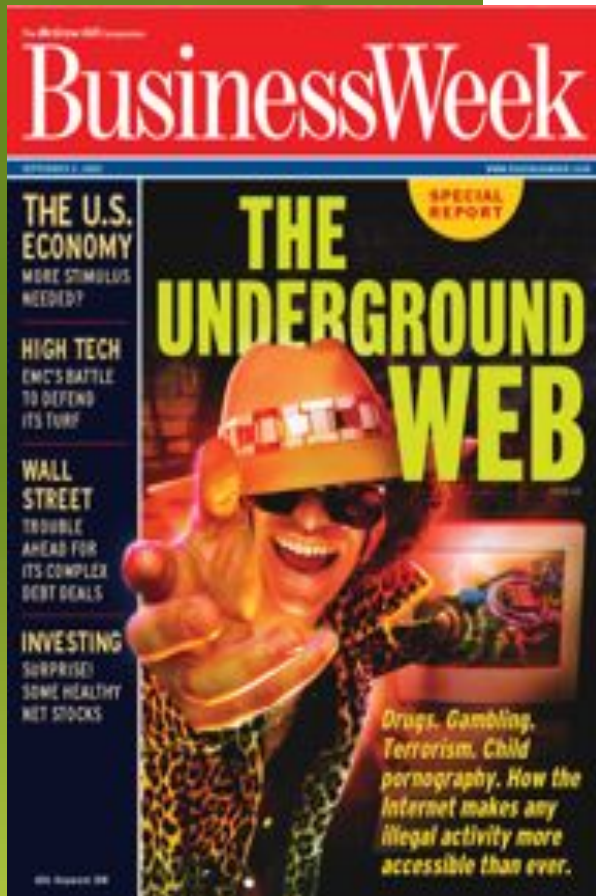
...imagine a world in which our sense of identity and community truly cohabitates the real and virtual realms. In the future, communities formed by ideas will be as strong as those formed by the forces of physical proximity. Kids will not know the meaning of nationalism. ... Local governance will abound. A united planet is certain... Already today, belonging to a digital culture binds people more strongly than the territorial adhesives of geography - if all parties are truly digital.

Nicholas Negroponte in *Wired*, 1997





## Buyer's Remorse?



### The virtual Bowery

[The Internet is] a place where crime is rampant and every twisted urge can be satisfied. Thousands of virtual streets are lined with casinos, porn shops, and drug dealers. Scam artists and terrorists skulk behind seemingly lawful Web sites. And cops wander through once in a while, mostly looking lost. It's the Strip in Las Vegas, the Red Light district in Amsterdam, and New York's Times Square at its worst, all rolled into one -- and all easily accessible from your living room couch.

"The Underground Web," *Business Week*, 9/2/02



# Cairncross: Everything is different

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- ~~1. Death of distance~~
- ~~2. Fate of Location~~
- 3. Improved Connections
- ~~4. Increased Mobility~~
- 5. More Customized Networks
- 6. Deluge of Information
- 7. Increased Value of Brand
- 8. More Minnows, more Giants
- ~~9. More Competition~~
- 10. Increased Value of Niches
- 11. Communities of Practices
- ~~12. Loose-Knit Corporation Culture~~
- 13. Openness
- 14. Manufacturers as Service Providers
- ~~15. Inversion of Home and Office~~
- 16. Proliferation of Ideas
- 17. Decline of National Authority
- 18. Loss of Privacy
- 19. Global Premium for Skills
- ~~20. Rebirth of Cities~~
- ~~21. Rise of English~~
- 22. Communities of Culture
- 23. A New Trust
- 24. People as Scarce Resource
- 25. Global Peace



# Social Life in a Virtual World

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Predictions that Internet/Web will decentralize authority

permit ground-up social & political organization

Create "virtual communities"

Cf the "virtual corporation," "smart mobs," [moveon.org](http://moveon.org), etc., which are said to facilitate direct democracy



# The rise of “virtual communities”

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# What's Real and What is Not



When “virtual” = real...

## Real

banking  
journal  
textbook

## Not

machine  
keyboard  
pets  
reality  
house tour?

## ??

museum  
library  
**community**  
**friends**



VIRTUAL  NEW YORK CITY





# The Rise of “Virtual Communities,” I

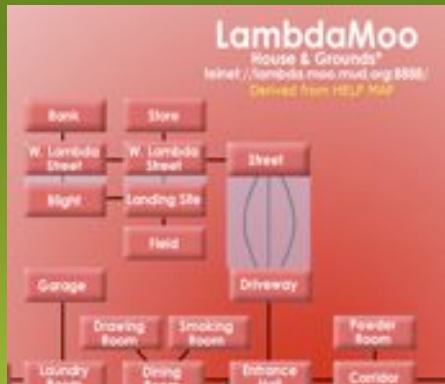


1978-79: Early MUDS (Multi-User Dungeons) enable players of text-adventure games to interact & team up.

1979 > Early BBS's (Bulletin Board services) allow users to connect via modem to a common server & post messages.

1980: USENET → “poor man’s ARPANET” to allow users to exchange email & software.

1990: First MOOs [“MUD Object Oriented”] created at Xerox Palo Alto Research center.





# The Rise of “Virtual Communities,” II



1985: Stewart Brand & Larry Brilliant found the BBS The WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link), which becomes an influential “virtual community” providing email, forums, etc.

1986: Matchmaker dating service begun as text-based BBS, adding to groups like soc.singles, etc

1995 Craig Newmark founds Craigslist in San Francisco for posting of local events; by 2000, expanded to 9 cities.



# The birth of spam



“Spam is the shadow history, the negative space, of the concept of community online” Finn Brunton

1971: sysadmin “abuses” MIT time-sharing system w/ “to all” msg:  
THERE IS NO WAY TO PEACE. PEACE IS THE WAY.”

5/1/1978: “Proto-Spam” message sent to 593 addresses on ARPAnet,  
DIGITAL WILL BE GIVING A PRODUCT PRESENTATION OF THE  
NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE DECSYSTEM-20 FAMILY

Early 1980’s: Users of BBS and MUDs take to repeating “spam” & bits of  
Monty Python routine to annoy other users or drive newbies out of the  
discussion.

1994: “Green Card spam” sent by Canter & Siegel law firm as  
bulk Usenet posting.

By mid-1990’s, AOL is selling mailing list of 37m for \$50k

Responses: harassment & vigilanteism, parliamentarianism,  
authoritarianism



# The Beginnings of Social Networking Sites

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1997: Slashdot created to provide user-generated "News for nerds." Becomes wildly popular antecedent of blogs.

1997 Sixdegrees.com founded, social networking site that achieved 1m members and anticipated Friendster, MySpace, LinkedIn & FaceBook etc.



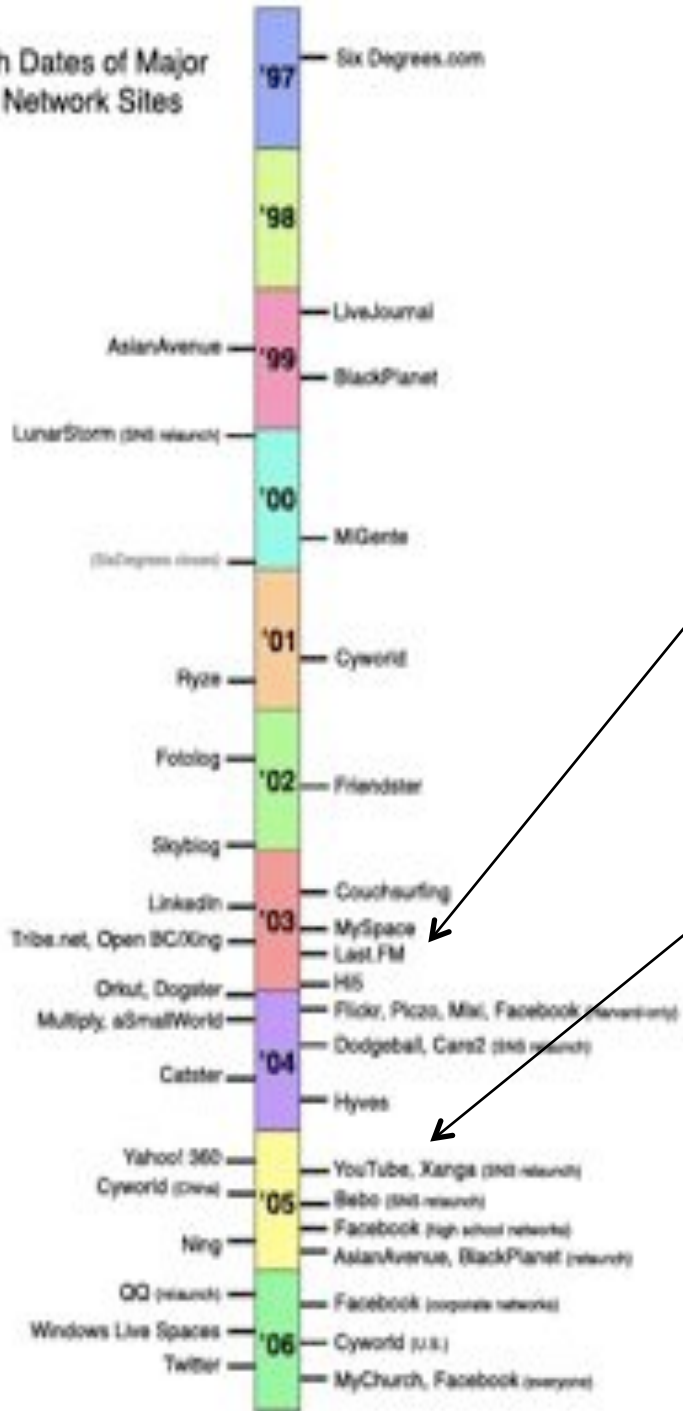
# Political organization online



1998 Moveon.org founded to militate for moving past Clinton impeachment hearings. In 2003, becomes important channel for opposition to Iraq war, major source of funding for antiwar candidates.

2002 Meetup.com founded to facilitate offline meeting and networking of interest groups. During buildup to campaign, it becomes an important source of grassroots political organization for Howard Dean campaign, later for Kerry & Edwards.

Launch Dates of Major Social Network Sites



# The Triumph of Social Networks

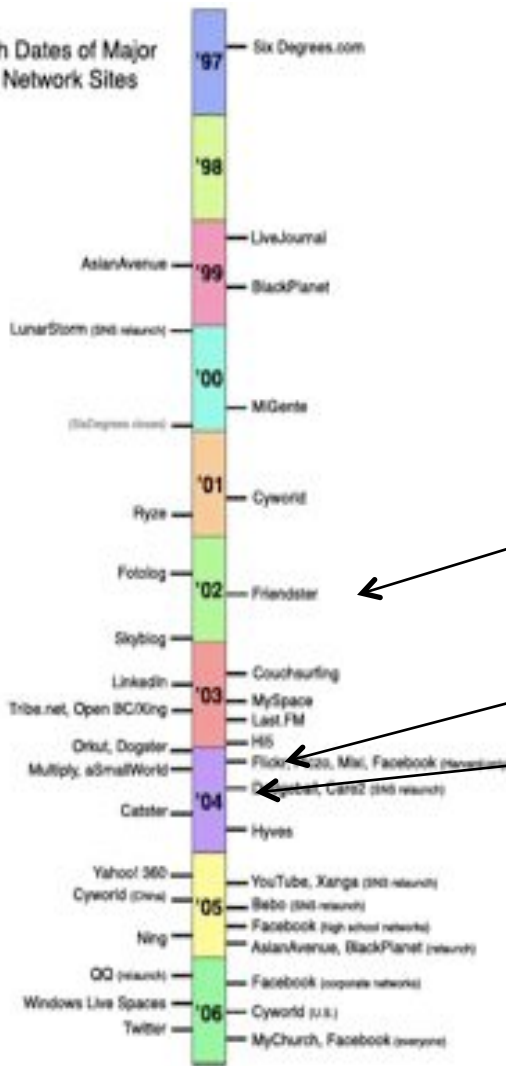
2003: myspace founded, rapidly becomes largest soc. networking site. Complaints about stalking, exploitation, spam, etc. lead some schools to block site.

2003: Second Life launched by Linden Labs.

2004: Facebook launched by Mark Zuckerberg.

2008: Helped by Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes, Obama campaign's use of new media ("MyBo") enables it to raise \$200m by end of primary season and recruit numerous volunteers.

## Launch Dates of Major Social Network Sites



# The Triumph of Social Networks

Dating oriented, static, “profile-centric”

“media-centric”

“location-centric” (LBS)

Later SNS’s add Dynamic features – status updates, tweets, microblogging, etc.

Marking and displaying relationships (friends, MS “top 8,” followers, etc.)

etc.

LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+,  
Foursquare, SnapChat,  
Formspring, Ask,fm, etc.



# The complications of “community”

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Online interaction creates or strengthens groups organized around significant common interests; e.g., sexual orientation, political activism, medical conditions...

But "community" is also used for almost any kind of group formed online... so long as it's judged positive





# The complications of “community”



“Community” usually implies rich interaction around common interests

Online interaction creates or strengthens groups organized around significant common interests;

*Community* can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. Most important, ...unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably...

Raymond Williams

**Campbell's Community**

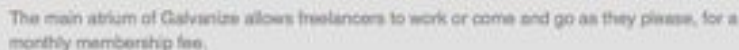


Welcome Campbell's Kitchen Nutrition & Wellness Labels for Education Our Company



“There is no place for anonymity  
in a trusted community.”

“When we examined our community in New York, we found that some property managers weren’t providing a quality, local experience to guests,” the company said in a blog post. The removed landlords controlled a total of 2,000 rooms.





# Varieties of Online Community

high-school  
alums  
Book History  
list  
MeetUp  
leukemia dl

## Relation of online media to social groups

Supports      Amplifies /extends      Transforms      Creates





# Affordances shape behavior

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No better than we have to be...



# Reproducing Offline Social Divisions



What distinguishes adoption of MySpace and Facebook among American teens is not cleanly about race or class, ... The division can be seen through the lens of taste and aesthetics, two value-laden elements that are deeply entwined with race and class. It can also be seen through the network structures of teen friendship, which are also directly connected to race and class. And it can be seen through the language that teens – and adults – use to describe these sites....

danah boyd



# Reproducing Offline Social Divisions



Cheesy or creative; classy or boring?

'MySpace is for the riff-raff and Facebook is for the landed gentry.'

'MySpace just seems like the other side of the tracks.'



*Do social media always reproduce offline categories?*

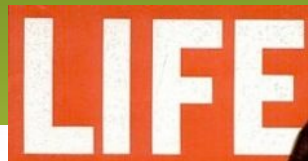


## Technology and incivility

“Since the nineteenth century, every new form of communication has multiplied the opportunities for unwelcomed intrusions on our persons and privacy...”

*GN Ascent of the A-word* 2012

“The serenading troubadour can now thrum his throbbing guitar before the transmitter undisturbed by apprehensions of shotguns and bulldogs,” 1884



### Transistor Craze— There's No Escape

by DAVID E. SCHERMAN

Oct. 15, 1960 Mrs. Sol Rosen of 1389 38th St., Brooklyn, N.Y., a housewife's assistant, heard a loud

trumpet, adding that one has swung him in the back during the commercial. People inside things, often a pretty handy place to be, continually reported how they were seized by a loud

garbage man, somehow as we listened, differences didn't matter, and he waved approvingly. Another heart-breaking case is that of John Phillips, piano player in a rock 'n' roll band in

SPECIAL  
REPORT





# The New Bestiary: Flamers, Trolls, Sock Puppets, Bullies...



...there are no more assholes walking the earth than there used to be when they went by other names. But it's fair to say that [the age] has created a host of new occasions for acting like assholes and new ways of performing assholism... In their power and ubiquity, digital technologies introduce hitherto unimaginable possibilities for being uncivil and inconsiderate: cyber-bullying, tweeting or checking your mail in the middle of a meeting, posting anonymous defamations about an ex-boss or ex-girlfriend..., lurking and trolling on blogs and discussion lists, and all the other forms of misbehavior that new media have given rise to.

*GN, Ascent of the A-word 2012*

The repeal of reticence...



# Being public and being "in public"



## Redefining social categories

"the technological constraints and affordances of a site will shape user practices and...social norms will emerge over time." Ellison & Boyd

"it is often difficult for two users who both call each other a friend to know if they are talking about the same thing" (Fono & Raynes-Goldie 2006)

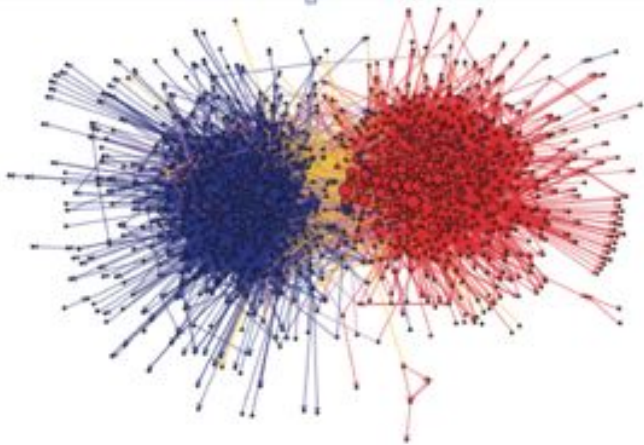
Or is it?

"Drama implies something not to be taken seriously, ... while the adult-defined 'bullying' connotes childishness or immaturity to teenagers." Marwick & Boyd



# The Internet in Public Life

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A new public sphere or the death knell of the old one?



# The Internet as a Public Space

"The new electronic independence recreates the world in the image of a global village." Marshall McLuhan

"The power of elites to determine what [is] news via a tightly controlled dissemination system [has been] shattered. The ability and authority to distribute text are now truly democratized" Hugh Hewitt

"internet as a public sphere"

About 533,000 results (0.40 seconds)

## [The virtual sphere](#)

[rma.sagepub.com/content/4/1/9/abstract](#)

by Z. Papacharissi - 2002 - Cited by 356 - Related articles

The virtual sphere: The internet as a public sphere. Zizi Papacharissi, Temple University, Philadelphia, [zpapacha@temple.edu](mailto:zpapacha@temple.edu) ...

## [IPW Internet and the Public Sphere](#)

[ejournalist.com.au/v6n2/subsysin622.pdf](#)

File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat - Quick View

by K. Ubayssiri - Cited by 1 - Related articles

Mar 14, 2007 - ... John Michael. (2003). The internet as a public sphere.

Available <http://www.cultsock.net/cultsock/mediat/internet4.htm> ...

## [democ.htm](#)

[www.hnet.uci.edu/imposter/writings/democ.html](#)

The Internet as a Public Sphere? The issue of the public sphere is at the heart of a reconceptualization of democracy. Contemporary social relations seem to ...

## [Habermas, the Internet and the Public Sphere - an essay by Jake ...](#)

[jakeg.co.uk/essays/habermas](#)

The Internet as a Public Sphere - <http://www.cultsock.net/cultsock/mediat/internet4.htm>. The Jürgen Habermas Web Resource (Michigan State ...

## [The Internet As Public Sphere: Contesting Social Networks](#)

[www.tgsu.edu/online/Dateline/internet.htm](#)

... large, mainstream news source owned by Time Warner - which, as Habermas and others would surely note, is itself a threat to the internet as a public sphere.

## [Mechanisms of an Online Public Sphere: The Website Slashdot](#)

[jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue2/poor.html](#)

by N. Poor - Cited by 69 - Related articles

161-186). New York: State University of New York. Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The virtual sphere: The internet as a public sphere. *New Media & Society*, 4 (1), 9-27.

## [The Internet as a public sphere: Blogging climate change in it ...](#)

[uni-hamburg.academia.edu/.../The\\_Internet\\_as\\_a\\_public\\_sphere\\_06...](#)

New media technologies have brought massive changes in the whole arena of public communication patterns including journalistic works in recent years.

## [The internet as a virtual public sphere - Forums online and the ...](#)

[esec.academia.edu/.../The\\_internet\\_as\\_a\\_virtual\\_public\\_sphere\\_-\\_Fo...](#)

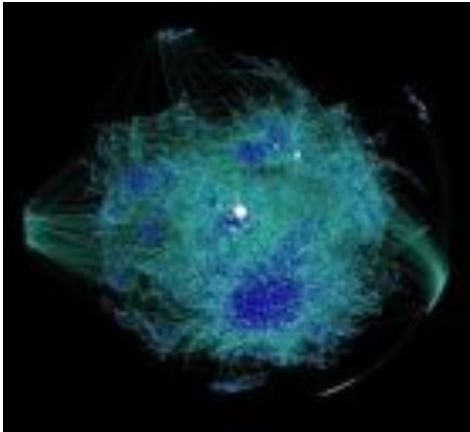
Papacharissi, Z. (2002). "The virtual sphere: The internet as a public sphere", *New Media and Society*, 4, 1, p. 9-27. Poit, R. (2005). "The internet and political ...

[ipw New Media & Society](#)



# Is the Internet a Community?

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Cf. James F. Moore (Berkman Center), on "the global consciousness of the second superpower," March 2003:

The Internet and other interactive media continue to penetrate more and more deeply all world society... The collective power of texting, blogging, instant messaging, and email across millions of actors cannot be overestimated. Like a mind constituted of millions of inter-networked neurons, the social movement is capable of astonishingly rapid and sometimes subtle community consciousness and action...



# Claims about online political discourse

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## **The internet**

Broadens access to information

Broadens the opportunity to speak.

Increases the number of information sources, bypassing media "gatekeepers" or official censors.

Offers information about a wider range of topics, and more information and opinion on any given topic.

Provides more reliable ways of checking or interpreting information, and gives citizens more opportunity to verify information



# Claims about online political discourse

---

## **The internet**

Restricts the exchange of information and opinion to a more closed, like-minded group (silo effect)

Exposes people to more information that is misleading, inaccurate, extreme, inflammatory, etc.;

Eliminates the guidance that the traditional media provided.

Widens the divisions between the informed and ill-informed sectors of the public.



# **Polarization of Political Discourse**

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# Polarization and the "Siloing" of Political Discourse



Online discourse facilitates "siloing" of political discourse...

But siloing has independent offline roots

Polarization of political language on the Internet mirrors polarization of elite/activist views and the increasing importance of elective associations (geographical, occupational)

Number of Americans living in landslide counties:

1976: 26%

2008: 48%





# Ruptured Discourses



Figure 1: Community structure of political blogs (expanded set), shown using utilizing a GEM layout [31] in the GUESS[3] visualization and analysis tool. The colors reflect political orientation, red for conservative, and blue for liberal. Orange links go from liberal to conservative, and purple ones from conservative to liberal. The size of each blog reflects the number of other blogs that link to it.

Lada Adamic & Nathalie Glance, 2005, "Divided They Blog"



## traffic is also polarized

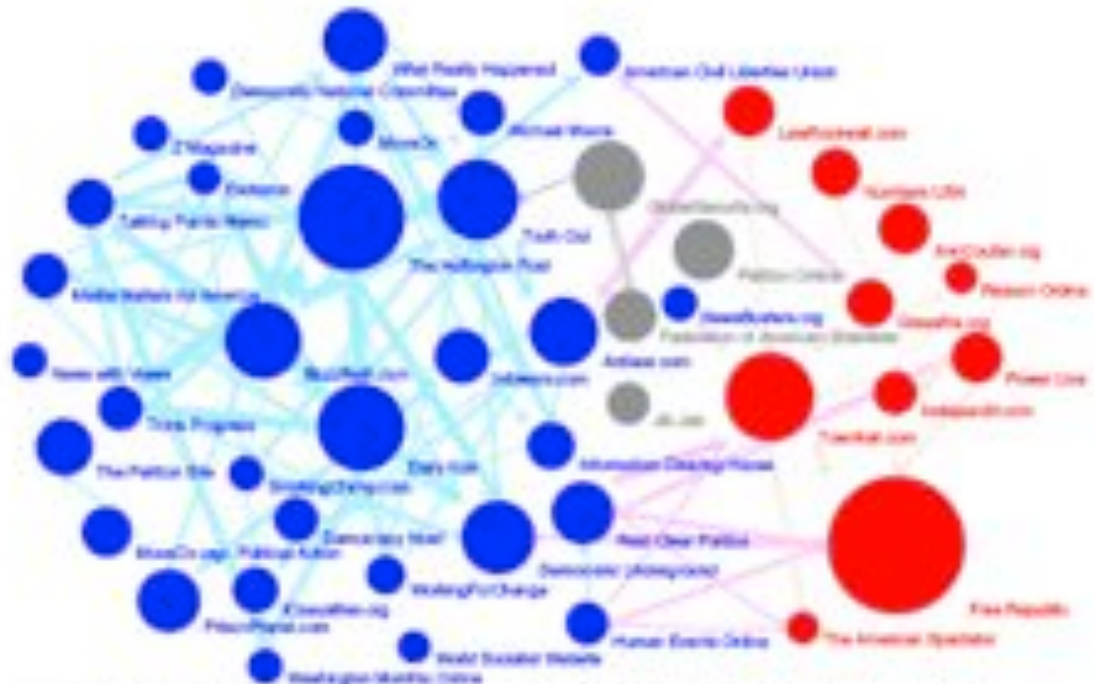


Figure 4.4 This figure maps traffic among the top 50 political Websites, as of May 2006. Liberal- or Democratic-leaning sites are in blue; conservative- or Republican-leaning sites are in red. Self-declared neutral or nonpartisan sites are in gray.



## Polarization by gender?

Rank	Blog	Male readership (%)
1.	<i>DailyKos.com</i>	47%
2.	Instapundit	59 %
3.	<i>Eschaton (Atrios)</i>	52%
4.	Michelle Malkin	57 %
5.	<i>Crooks and liars</i>	32%
6.	Little Green Footballs	89%
7.	Powerline	74%
8.	RedState.org	68%
9.	<i>Wenkette</i>	46%
10.	Andrew Sullivan	53%
11.	<i>Kevin Drum</i>	55%
12.	Hugh Hewitt	80%

Sites with highest pct of male readers  
tend to be conservative

# What you tweet

Republicans	Democrats	African-American	Starbucks fans
pelosi	lgbt	niggas	net
obamacare	suicides	songz	...
stimulus	homophobia	betta	sms
liberty	veggie	datz	...
patriots	baggers	finna	virus
taxpayer	rwnj	weave	restart
feds	inequality	flocka	recipes
taxpayers	wingnuts	bruh	oatmeal
trillion	mandela	boondocks	tasting
naacp	argh	jeezy	espresso
socialism	cinema	brotha	candles
...	mas	ole	pumpkins
libs	horrifying	str8	delish
leftist	rights	hart	columbia
tyranny	hysteria	..smh	maple
imam	sexuality	pastor	
	omfg		
	libraries		



## Effects of the Internet

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The Internet potentially amplifies and enhances all forms of social organization

... But doesn't eliminate basic conflicts and oppositions...



# **Participation in online political discourse**

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# Participation in online political discourse

Does the net level the informational playing field?

Initially, those with access tend to be younger, college-educated, male, white...

Curves of access are flattening...

But among those w/access, older users are more likely to be daily users...

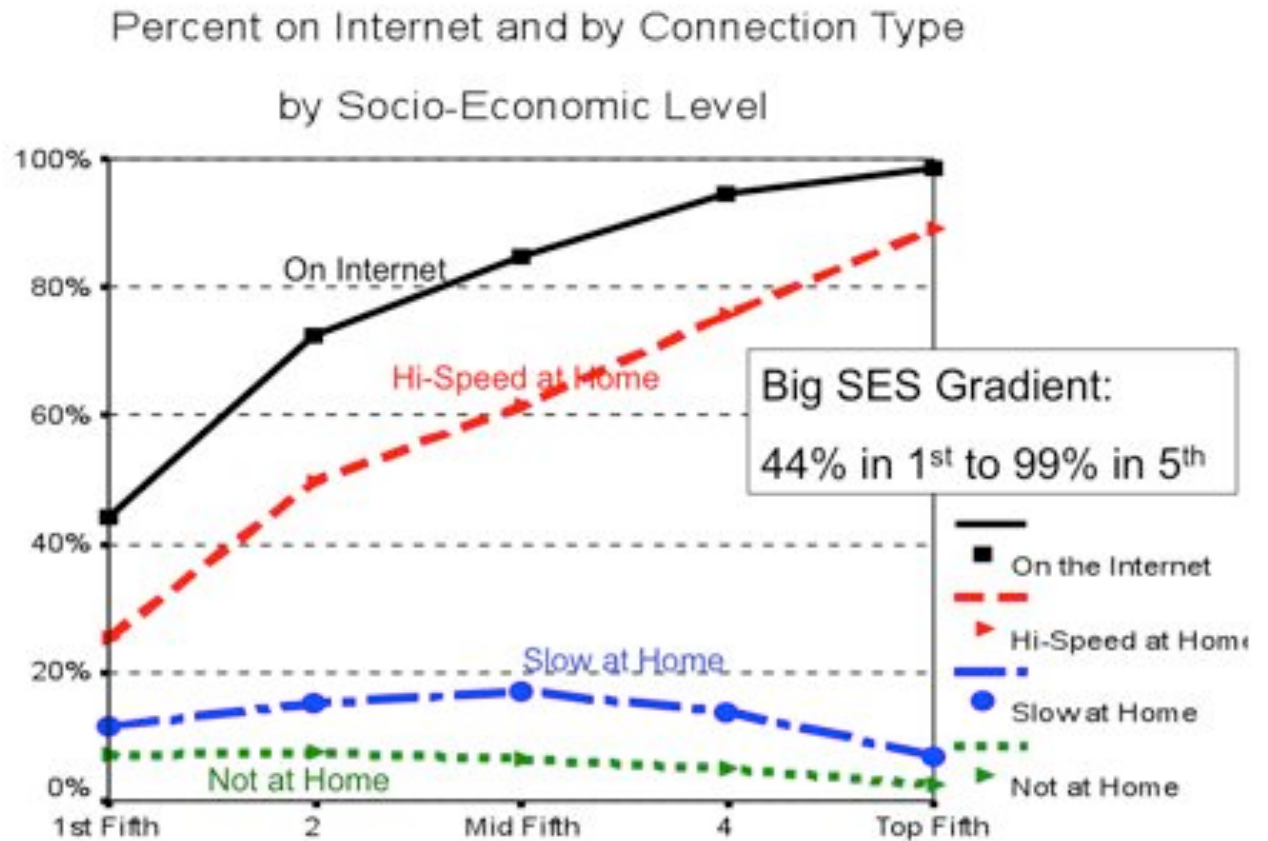
	Millennials Ages 18-33	Gen X Ages 34-45	Younger Boomers Ages 46-55	Older Boomers Ages 56-64	Silent Gen. Ages 65-73	G.I. Gen. Age 74+	All online adults Age 18+
% who go online	95	86	81	76	58	30	79

a.

But how much does access/daily use predict political engagement?

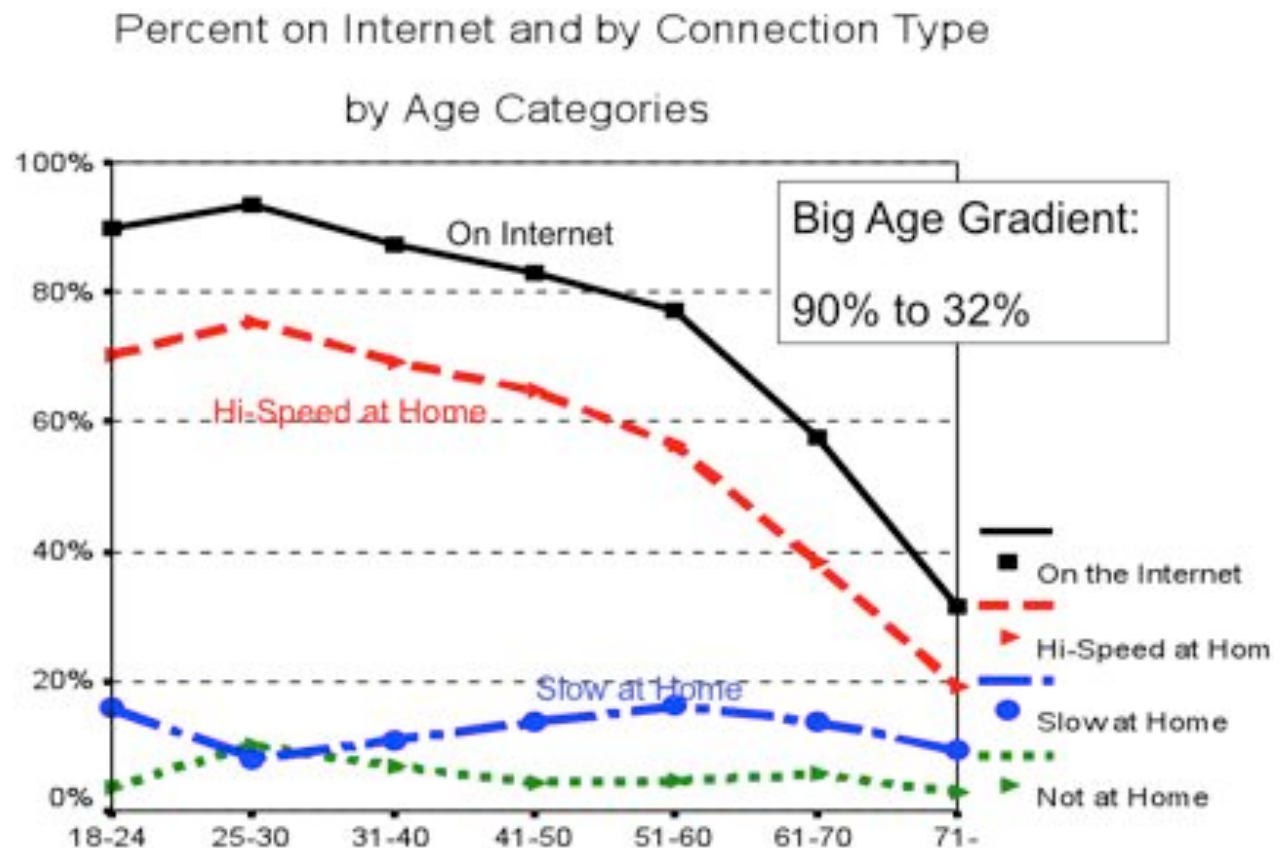


# Political Participation Online



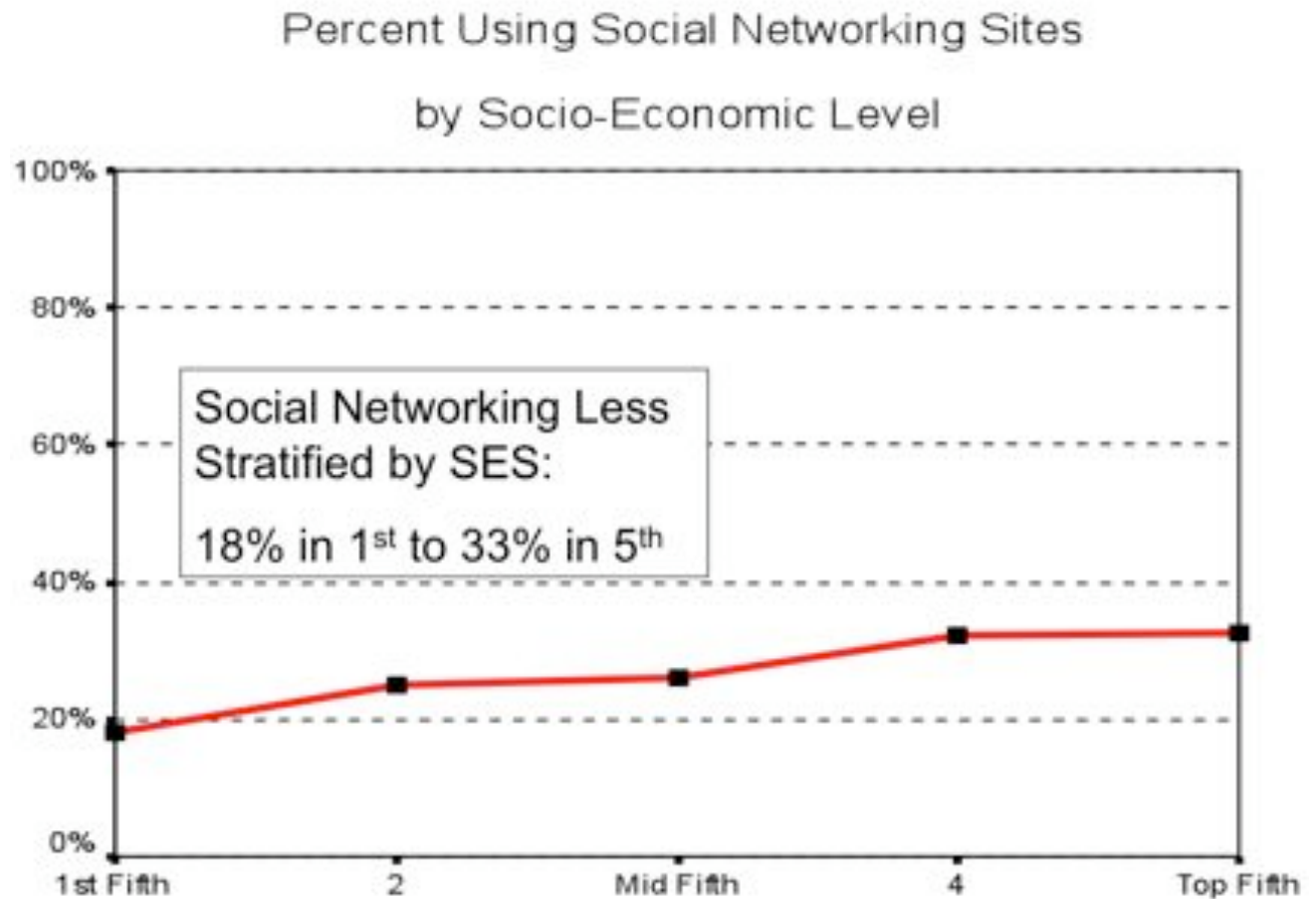


# Reinforcing Social Divisions



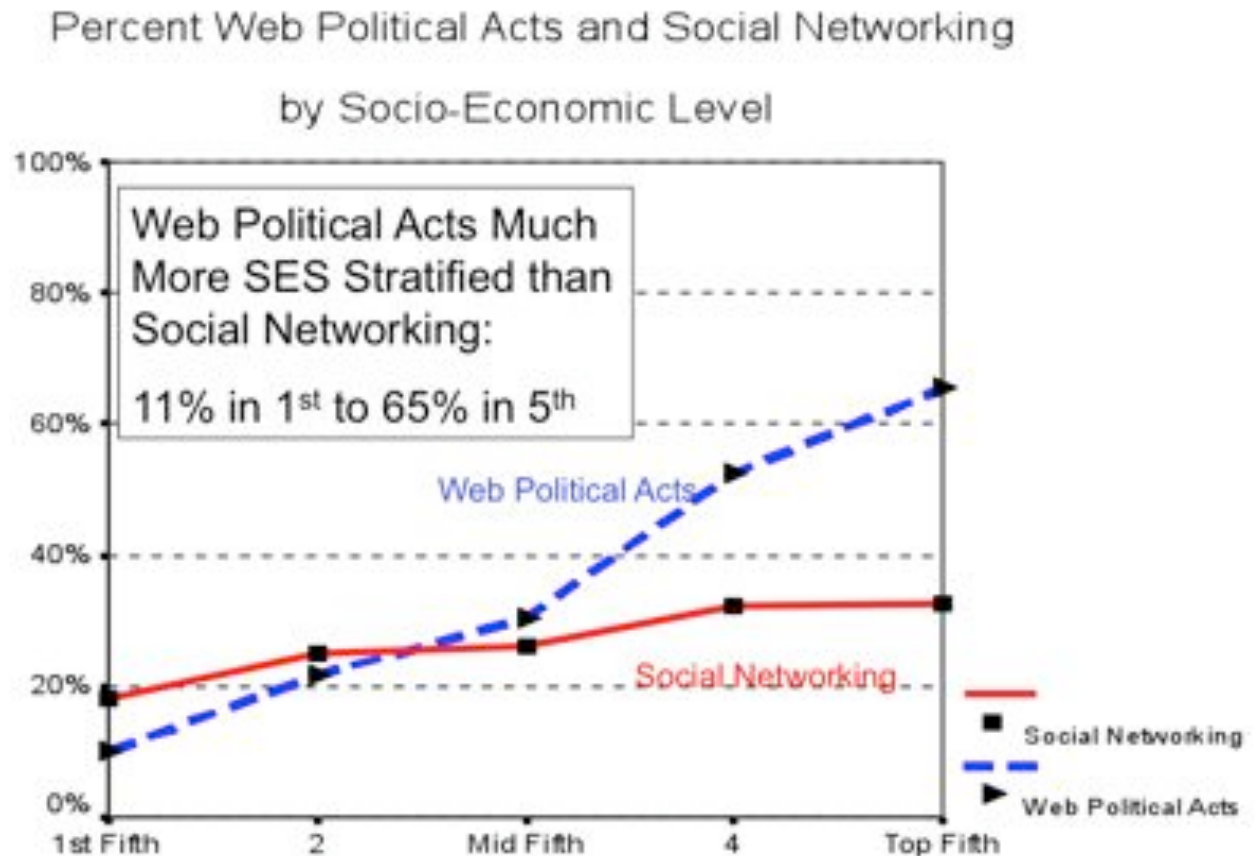


# Political Participation Online



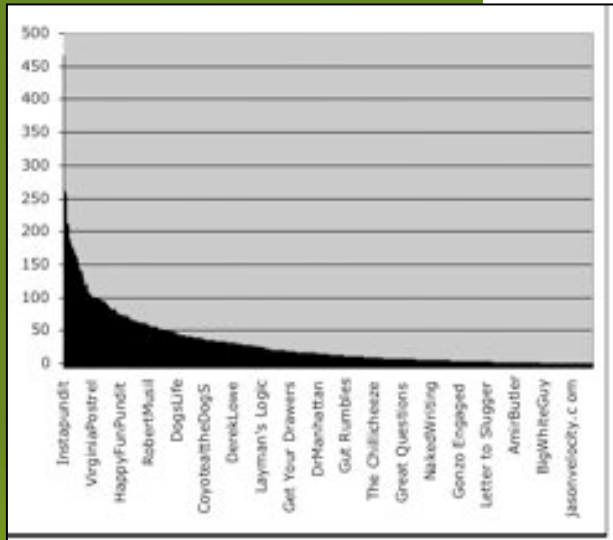


# Political Participation Online





# Political Participation Online



"Winner take all" effects: Zipf's Law distributions  
(note: Most influential bloggers are journalists etc.)

Internet doesn't level political participation or  
access to political information within society...

But it may broaden participation & information  
flow among political classes...

And does facilitate lateral connections &  
organization



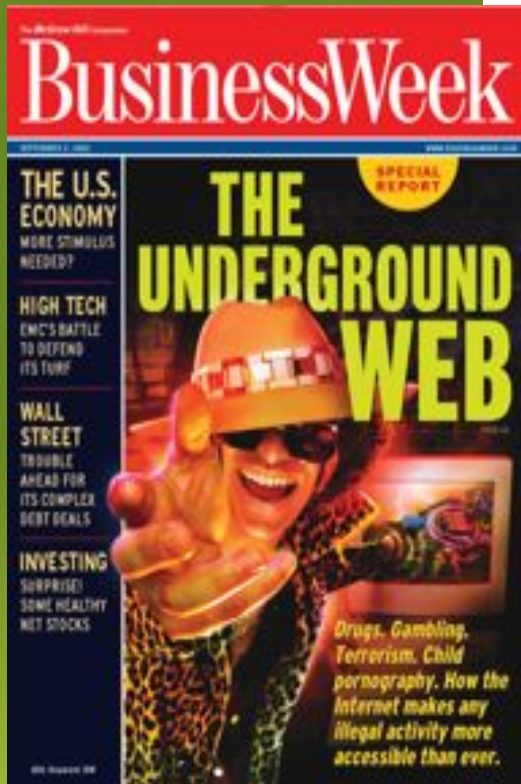
# Virtual Pollution

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## Cyberspace: The Morning After



### The virtual Bowery

[The Internet is] a place where crime is rampant and every twisted urge can be satisfied. Thousands of virtual streets are lined with casinos, porn shops, and drug dealers. Scam artists and terrorists skulk behind seemingly lawful Web sites. And cops wander through once in a while, mostly looking lost. It's the Strip in Las Vegas, the Red Light district in Amsterdam, and New York's Times Square at its worst, all rolled into one -- and all easily accessible from your living room couch.

"The Underground Web," *Business Week*, 9/2/02



# Varieties of "Rotten Information"

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Problems of authenticity: fakes, hoaxes, forgeries, plagiarism, etc.

Problems of quality: reliability and “authoritativeness”

Problems of “pollution”: pornography, violence, racism & hate speech, predators, incivility, etc.

Mary Douglas: "Dirt is matter out of place... Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements."

How to tell pollution from the merely "unacceptable"?



# A Racist Hoax

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## THE FRANKLIN PROPHECY

Recorded by Charles Coteworth Pinckney

Delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787

"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the Jews.

"In whatever country Jews have settled in any great number, they have lowered its moral tone; depreciated its commercial integrity; have segregated themselves and have not been assimilated; have sneered at and tried to undermine the Christian religion upon which that nation is founded....

. If you do not exclude them from these United States, in their Constitution, in less than 200 years they will have swarmed here in such great numbers that they will dominate and devour the land and change our form of government...



## A Racist Hoax

### THE FRANKLIN PROPHECY

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. If you do not exclude them from their Constitution, they will swarm here in such numbers as to dominate and devour the land and change our form of government...

"I cannot find a single original source that gives the slightest justification for believing that the Prophecy is anything more than a barefaced forgery. Not a word have I discovered in Franklin's letters and papers expressing any such sentiments against the Jews as are ascribed to him by the Nazis — American and German." Charles Beard, *NY Times*, March 10, 1937.



# Pervasiveness of Hate Speech

Google

Web [Show options...](#) Results 1 - 100 of about 1,800 for "protect this young nation from an insidious influence"

[The JEWS who Run Clinton and the USA](#)  
"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
[www.biblebelievers.org.au/cfile1.htm](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[JewishPost.com - The Franklin Prophecy: An Anti-Semitic Hoax Gets ...](#)  
"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and penetration. That menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
[www.jewishpost.com/...the-franklin-prophecy-an-anti-semitic-hoax-gets-new-life-on-the-internet.html](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[US Founding Fathers' Statements Concerning the Jews](#)  
... he declared: "I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. ...  
[www.scribd.com/...US-Founding-Fathers-Statements-Concerning-the-Jews](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[The Jews - 100 Facts](#)  
Fact #72 (11) — Benjamin Franklin: "I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and ...  
[www.scribd.com/doc/28107776/The-Jews-100-Facts](#) - [Cached](#)

[Show more results from www.scribd.com](#)

[What were 3 factors that led to the holocaust? - Yahoo! Answers](#)  
Dec 15, 2009 ... "I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. ...  
[answers.yahoo.com](#) : Arts & Humanities : History - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Americans Wake Up: Zionists & Israel ruling America. | Facebook](#)  
"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and penetration. That menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
[www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=10724185862](#) - [Cached](#)

[The Goldman Probe Is a Smokescreen | Republic Broadcasting Network](#)  
... agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the Jews. ...  
[republicbroadcasting.org/?p=8165](#) - [Cached](#)

[Juderhass Quotes](#)  
"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
[www.juderhass.com/resources.html](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)



# Pervasiveness of Hate Speech

Google [protect this young nation]

Web Show options...

[The JEWS who Run Clinton and the USA](#)  
"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
[www.5biblebelievers.org.au/cfile1.htm](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[JewishPost.com - The Franklin Prophecy](#)  
"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
[www.jewishpost.com/...the-franklin-prophecy-an-internet.html](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[US Founding Fathers' Statements Concerning the Jews](#)  
... he declared: "I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
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[The Jews - 100 Facts](#)  
Fact #72 (11) — Benjamin Franklin: "I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the ...  
[www.scribd.com/doc/28107776/The-Jews-100-Facts](#)

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The Call for Participation for Wikimania 2011 released. [Submit your presentations before](#)

## The Franklin Prophecy

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"The Franklin Prophecy", sometimes called "The Franklin Forgery", is an antisemitic speech falsely attributed to Benjamin Franklin, warning

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- Current events
- Rand

**ADL** Anti-Defamation League

ADL HOME REGIONAL OFFICES ABOUT

## The Franklin "Prophecy"

### Modern Anti-Semitic Myth Making

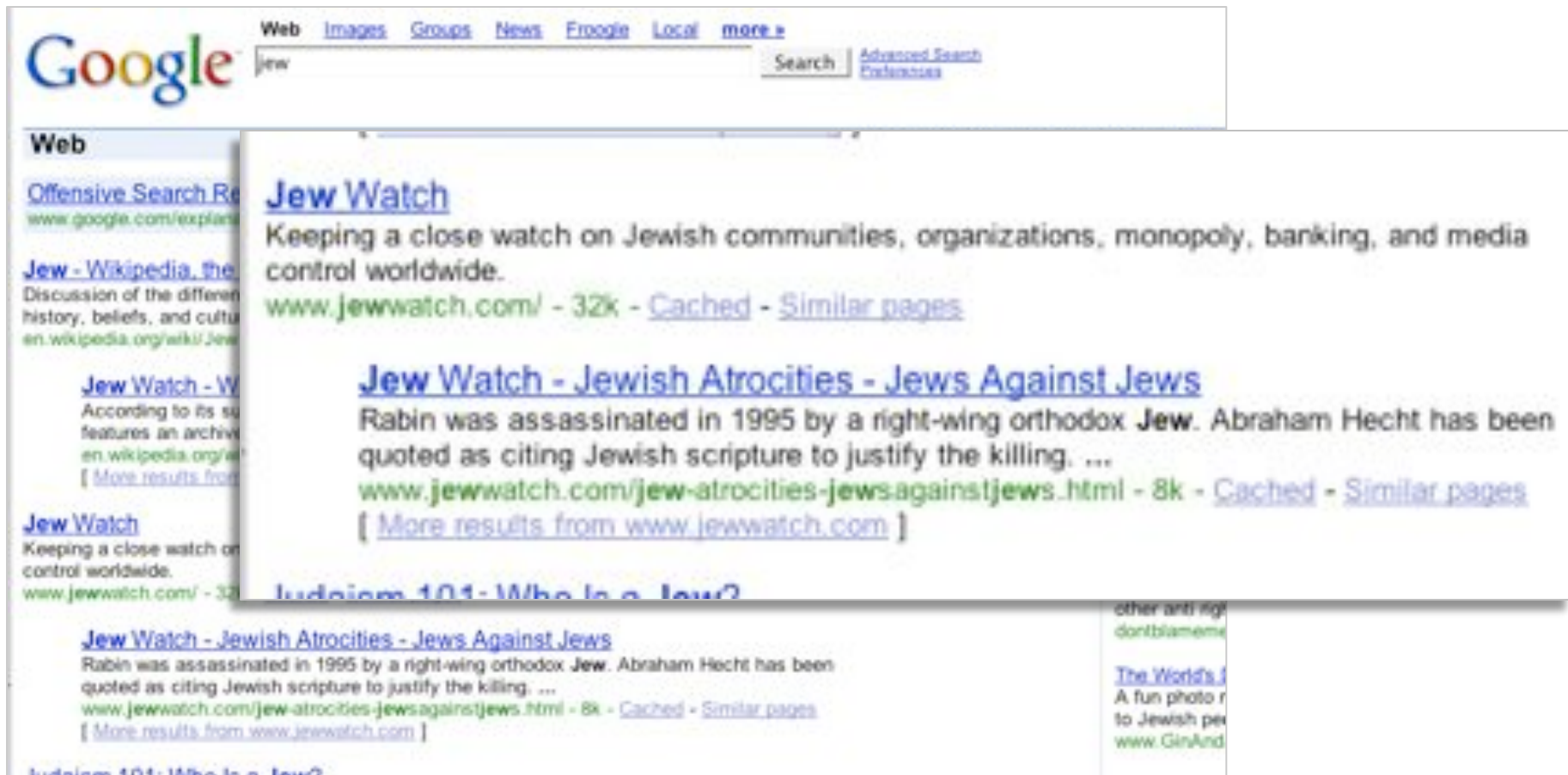
#### Introduction

#### The "Prophecy"

#### The Uses of the "Prophecy"

#### Documenting a Fraud

*This article, which thoroughly documents the history of the truth as the Franklin "Prophecy", appeared almost forty-five years after the 1954 issue of Facts, a publication of the Anti-Defamation League. The authors wrote "This 20-year-old anti-Semitic hoax is circulating more than sixty-five years after it was manufactured, the "Prophecy" a staple of anti-Semitic propaganda. It can be found on a number of websites maintained by haters and hate-groups. The article is, therefore*





# Google's Explanation

## Web

### Offensive Search Results

[www.google.com/explanation](http://www.google.com/explanation)

We're disturbed about these results as well. Please read o

If you recently used Google to search for the word "Jew," you may have seen results that were very disturbing. We assure you that the views expressed by the sites in your results are not in any way endorsed by Google. .... A site's ranking in Google's search results relies heavily on computer algorithms using thousands of factors to calculate a page's relevance to a given query. Sometimes subtleties of language cause anomalies to appear that cannot be predicted. ...



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*What would you tell Google to do?*



## Why is racist speech a problem?

---

How concerned should we be about racist speech?

Is there more racist speech than before?...

Or is it just more visible – like bad spelling?



# Porn in the Library!!



## City libraries say 'checking out' porn protected by First Amendment

By DOUGLAS MONTERO and BOB FREDERICKS

Last Updated: 9:03 AM, April 25, 2011

Posted: 1:54 AM, April 25, 2011

Like 2,583 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

Tweet 203

More Print

Shakespeare's plays, Einstein's theories -- and porn queen Jenna Jameson's steamy on-screen sexcapades.

New Yorkers can take their pick at the city's public libraries, thanks to a policy that gives a the most uncensored access to extreme, hard-core internet smut this side of the old Time Square.

The city's public libraries, under the protection of the First Amendment, are the only place in the city where you can find the most uncensored access to extreme, hard-core internet smut this side of the old Time Square.

"What they're doing is publicly funding an appetite for the most debased fare available," said Catholic League President Bill Donohue. "It's not like a Playboy centerfold anymore -- it's far worse."

HOME ON AIR BLOGS PODCASTS PHOTOS EVENTS & CONTESTS

Internet porn a First Amendment right at Chicago libraries

libraries

## Porn on L.A. Library Public Terminals Gets Serious Debate in City Hall

By Dennis Romero, Wed., Apr. 13 2011 @ 7:03AM

Categories: libraries

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2 Comments

0 Diggs

Ah, L.A. City Hall, always tackling the Big Issue. Like cat declawing and an Arizona business boycott that has no teeth.

And now the accidental, over-the-shoulder viewing of internet porn at public libraries is a matter of serious inquiry among city officials.

Yes, this was actually a major topic of discussion at the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee meeting this week.

And what was done about it?

Why nothing, of course.



merriek\_morano

Not an L.A. library branch (but could be)



## The profusion of pornography

---



Whereas pornography was once furtively glimpsed at dimly lighted newsstands or seedy adult theaters, today it is everywhere. It pours in over the Internet, sometimes uninvited, sometimes via eagerly forwarded links...

...Whereas children used to supplement sex education by tearing through *National Geographic* in search of naked aboriginals ... today many are confronted by pornographic images on a daily basis. In a 2001 poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 70% of 15-to 17-year-olds said they had accidentally come across pornography online.

*Time*, January 19, 2004



# Dimensions(?) of the Problem

The Washington Times

Originally published 04:45 a.m., September 29, 2009, updated 07:25 a.m., September 29, 2009

**EXCLUSIVE: Porn surfing rampant at U.S. science foundation**

Jim McElhatton



## Washington Takes Break From Porn Surfing to Bailout Wall Street

by Ann Coulter  
04/28/2010

Democrats have decided that in order to prevent Wall Street from starting meltdowns, wrecking the economy and leaving the American taxpayer in a bind, we need to give more oversight authority to the same government employees who were busy surfing Internet porn as private investors frantically tried to warn

## GOP ramps up attacks on SEC over porn surfing

AP Associated Press



By DANIEL WAGNER, AP Business Writer - Fri Apr 23, 12:14 pm ET

WASHINGTON - Republicans are stepping up their criticism of the Securities and Exchange Commission following reports that senior agency staffers spent hours surfing pornographic websites on government-issued computers while they were supposed to be policing the nation's financial system.

"More than 4 million Web sites worldwide show images of children being sexually exploited, said the U.N. investigator on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography..."

It is estimated that 100,000 sites contain child pornography."

"A total of 4.2 million websites contain pornography."

< 1% of Websites contain porn. Philip B. Stark UCB, 2006 (100-200m sites in all)

... But what do the numbers really mean?



# How Porn Sites are Used : An Exception to "Winner Take All"

## Distribution of User Volume Among Sites

<u>% of Sites</u>	<u>% of traffic</u>
	<u>All Sites</u>
.01	32.36
1	55.63
5	74.81
10	82.26
50	94.92

*Adamic & Huberman, 2000*



# How Porn Sites are Used : An Exception to "Winner Take All"

## Distribution of User Volume Among Sites

<u>% of Sites</u>	<u>% of traffic</u>	
	<u>All Sites</u>	<u>Porn Sites</u>
.01	32.36	1.4
1	55.63	15.83
5	74.81	41.75
10	82.26	59.29
50	94.92	90.76

*Adamic & Huberman, 2000*



# Responses to Rotten Information

---

Institutional & organizational adaptations

Social change

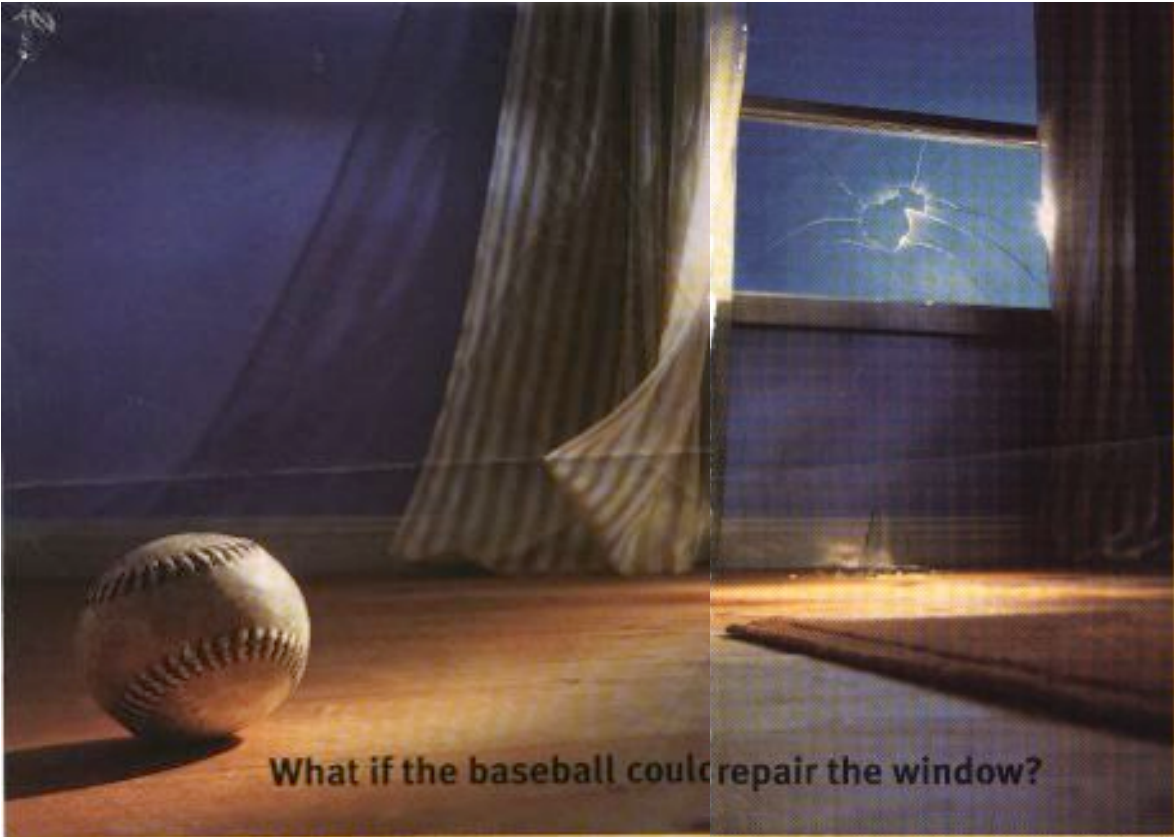
Appeals to market forces

Legislative and legal remedies

Technological solutions



# Technology to the rescue?



**What if the baseball could repair the window?**

The Internet caused the problem. It's only fitting it should also provide the solution.

myCIO.com  
Your Chief Internet Officer

myCIO.com is the world's first infrastructure application service provider. Rough translation, it fights Internet-related security problems via the Internet. ■ It gives your business managed protection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Protecting from threats such as bots and mal. Anti-virus, security audits, firewalls, VPN, anything you need. ■ Cutting-edge products like WiRm, CyberOps, Gauntlet and PGP are customized to your company's exact needs, then managed remotely. ■ Need another reason to select myCIO.com, it brought to you by Network Associates, the world's number one supplier of Internet security software. ■ Visit myCIO.com for a free trial. You'll see.

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# Filtering Frenzy

RemoteWebGuard

We'll help you help yourself.

April 25, 2011 13:44 ET

**Addicts Seek Help as US Internet Porn Addiction Rates Reach Alarming Heights**

New Web-Based Services Like RemoteWebGuard Help Addicts by Monitoring Online Behavior and Blocking Tempting Sites



Ad for McAfee's GuardDog software



## Legal Solutions

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Children's Internet Protection Act:

Passed in 2001 -- 3rd attempt to regulate online porn



# Limits of Text Blocking

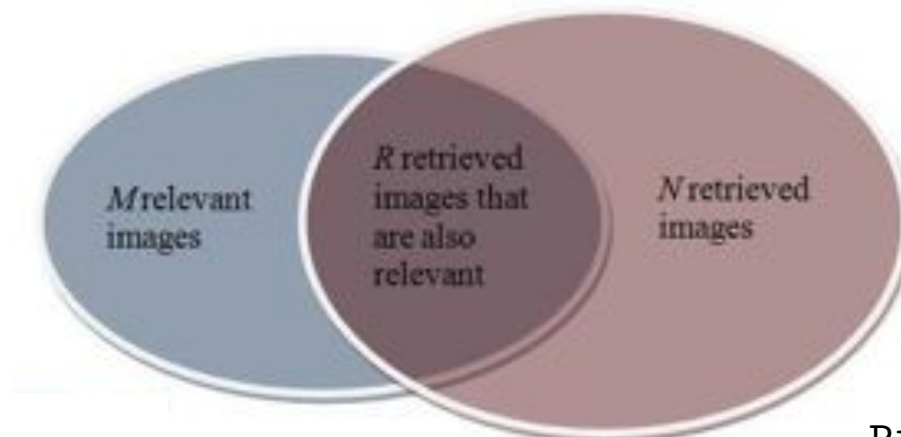
Text unavailable (imaged, etc.)

Confusion with innocent text

Need to block IP numbers

"Loophole" sites: anonymizer sites, Google cache & images

Inherent trade-offs of precision and recall



$$\text{Precision} = R/N$$

$$\text{Recall} = R/M$$



# Limits of Image Classification

Images found "Probably Objectionable" by WIPE (Wavelet Image Pornography Elimination / Detection).





## **Social, Economic & Institutional Responses to Internet Pornography**

---

Libraries can regulate use by means of use policies, training and guidance, monitoring of logs, tap-on-the-shoulder policies, etc.

Rights of other patrons can be protected by privacy screens, etc.


Parents can assume responsibility for monitoring kids' surfing.

Providers can offer "greenspace" browsers for kids.



# Social & Institutional Responses

Even porn can get old...



**MMORPG: World of Warcraft Blamed for Porn's Decline**  
MMORPG's Notes

Porn industry blames \$74m decline on the rise of online dating



About 1 year ago **Stan Schroeder** 12  Like

**Facebook and MySpace are Killing Porn?**

7  retweet  Share 23  Buzz 0  email  share

**Porn Flounders, But Adult Novelty Business Booms**

Published: Tuesday, 27 Oct 2009 | 10:47 AM ET

 Text Size



## **We've been here before**

---

Where else has technology interacted with social, political, and economic forces to produce outcome?

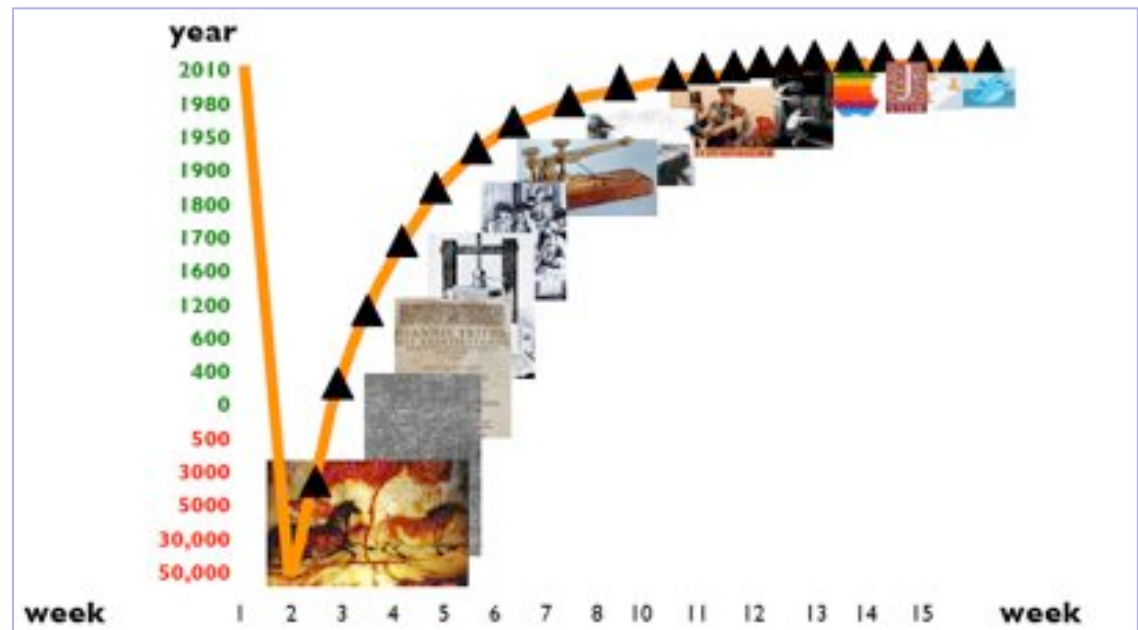


# We've been here before

Writing  
Print  
Telegraph &  
telephone  
Newspapers  
Advertising  
Propaganda  
Photography  
Radio & TV  
Computers  
Search  
Internet...

Where else has technology interacted with social, political, and economic forces to produce outcome?

Where hasn't it?





## Readings for May 2

---

NOTE: Bring to class a large broadsheet newspaper (e.g., the NY Times, the Wall Street Journal)

Required reading:

Auletta, Ken. 2010. "Publish or Perish." *The New Yorker*, April 26.

Additional:

Darnton, Robert. 2009. "Google and the Future of Books," *The New York Review of Books*, Feb. 12. (See also letters in response)



## Assignment for *Thurs. May 1*

---

Debate: On the last day of class, we'll hold a quasi-Oxford-style debate on the motion, "Resolved, the threats to adolescents' individual privacy on social media sites are best addressed by stricter regulation."

Pick one side, affirmative or negative, and enumerate three points to defend your position, citing as necessary the readings assigned for April 24, as well as the Wikipedia article "Privacy concerns with social networking services" and the Boyd and Marwick article "Social Privacy in Networked Publics" (see syllabus).

Indicate at the top of your assignment if you would prefer **not** to be called on to participate in the in-class debate.

Due Tues. Apr. 29 at 8pm.