

W18: High Tech Impact

Week Three

Topics

1. Projected Digital Futures

The Internet has turned 25. Projections about our digital future abound. PEW Research offers 15 thoughtful projections. And the tech ZDnet offers its own 8 features of the Internet Tsunami.

2. "Community" is Key

We are significantly defined by the communities in which we acquire our sense of self. Communication is central to community, and the digital revolution is all about communications.

3. Shifting Emphasis

In the past the focus was on how to establish and sustain an online community. These days, the focus is more on the impact all of our online communities have, and will have, on us.

4. Virtual Community Concern

Online communities often have limited scope. They can be good, but always within that limited scope. It seems reasonable to describe them as "thin". On the other hand, real communities can be too "thick".

5. Few Ethical Absolutes

Ethics is sensitive to context, and the digital revolution has radically changed the context. There's a reasonable argument in favor of case-based moral reasoning. Casuistry is worth study.

6. Online Trust

Much of normal life depends on trust. We trust established merchants, and we trust those with whom we have a good history. But the clues we learned have only limited applicability online, ... pity.

7. Privacy Issues

We need to work at understanding the trade-offs between privacy and a range of alternative concerns. Crime and terrorism are a concern. What about child supervision? What about medical records?

8. Prudent Security

Take prudent steps to protect your security. Take few steps online without looking carefully at where you're headed. Identity theft (and spoofing) are real and can do real harm. Take prudent steps.