

BT306 IT in Society

Assignment 2

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Question

Using examples from the lecture and seminar topics in Weeks 6, 7 and 11: Is the Information Age the future we want?; Surveillance. To be able to relate surveillance to power; Organisational learning and knowledge management? Evaluate whether ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) can benefit or harm members of society in the 21st century.

The past in the future - is the Information Age continual

Gorniak-Kocikowska (1995), in her paper regarding the computer revolution, suggests the future is un-bespoke, yet computer tailoring is already off-the-peg. She merits the Information Age's capacity for global character recognition and 'will address the totality of human actions and relations.' Despite her upward approach to computing diligence across the globe, she connects the 150 years required for the industrial revolution to solve human *quirem* and the 40 years we have tried to decipher our prospects under the computer revolution. It is interesting to compare this with both Huxley's 'technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards' and Buckminster Fuller's (1980) 'we are blessed with technology that would be indescribable to our forefathers': both noted in lecture topics in week 6 of this module. But it has always been favourable to holiday on the coast or countryside when you live in a city. Information is most valuable, but we are overloaded with both the seemly and unseemly in the information age. Almost halfway through the supposed computer revolution, Gorniak-Kocikowska, has doubted Buckminster Fuller's optimism in her summary: computers 'serve as a tool in gaining and maintaining dominion over the world by one particular group of humans.' More recently, Gorniak-Kocikowska (2004), lectured at ETHICOMP2004 a more positive, but no less uncertain; stating that computing was developing accidentally and with no 'obvious existing need.' It would seem there is no conclusive evidence of whether ICTs benefit or harm 21st century society as it stands.

Information, in most formats, has been of essence to society. Society itself is the continual exchange of views, laughter and politics, both the formal and informal kinds. ICTs, and in particular the Internet, are thus demonstrating society in new technological ways, and enabling true multiculturalism. We should still be aware that cultural performance has always been best appreciated from a mostly monocultural environment where the differences raise more interest. Checchi et al. (2002) concludes that while qualitative and interpretive accounts of ICT's impact have been economically monitored on a global basis, very little culturally specific augmentation has been performed. So information transmitted by the Internet may be both globally and socially flawed. Checchi et al. (2006) are still uncertain of conclusions outside of managerial and IT professional reassurance. But Internet information disposal is available to the masses proliferally without management. Even socialism, let alone communism, capitalism or dictatorship, requires management, albeit not the future the

majority necessarily desire. So the Information Age is perhaps merely a transition of human history and this paper is just Checchi and others uncertainty again: I know how I feel, but students are notoriously cautious of being uneven.

Some sensibility is given to the increasing use of PDF files in social intercourse, and in particular for the legality, literary copyright and privacy of Internet use; as much as library utilization has always been fundamental to human education. Reading, not copying, has been the evolution of where we are now, and a widespread future is hopefully less intransigent with forthcoming ICT. Originality is more likely with the care Adobe has shown and it's practical use should perhaps be given to Web site design software and code.

Chik (2005) considers the maintenance of privacy the protection of personal information on the Internet. He sees the rise and erroneous fall of financial services available there and the ongoing impact of cybercrimes. He summarises that 'governments and industries must re-instill the trust and confidence of Internet users both in commercial and non-commercial interaction.'

The learning outcomes of Week 6 ask to evaluate 'the impact of technology in terms of its effect on society, particularly societal progress.' As society has had very slow development over history, we have always had a reasonable amount of time to analyse it's progression, amalgamating it with human requirements. The recent technological changes are paramountly fast and assessment of them will be both quick and progress uncertain until results are recorded. Deletions are a possibility. We are at a crossroads with no map but the Information Age is continual. We were asked to synthesise our own definition. I will use one word: discertainty. That is a human social trait, and not one recognisable by a computer. Dystopia was used in Week 6's PDF file; the opposite of utopia. So we must ask ourselves whether the Information Age is utopian or dystopian. The relational subjects of surveillance and learning/knowledge management question whether we are used them on the scale promoted by ICTs.

Surveillance

Surveillance has been part of our history, from Marcus Aurelius to the KGB. If policing ICT use is required, then information and communication has always been. We simply need to unmitigate the proper use of computer surveillance in line with financially lucrative computer-enhanced criminal behaviour. Surveillance, on behalf of governmental bodies, is clearly important to the the US Supreme Court (2003) case against the American Library Association (ALA) which ensures filtering is used on library Internet access. How effective this filtering may be at image recognition is shown by ALA's response that 'filters were imprecise and blunt instruments' and contrary to First Amendment rights. Despite the good work filters can provide in preventing plainly obscene Internet content, they can also block literary volumes containing unusual or foreign words. Surveillance has always been a requirement of power, but never has it been across an entire population. Week 7's Panopticon seems a case in point with library filtering, but also points to the Information Commission's note of private companies 'secretly monitoring staff emails and their use of the

internet may be illegal.’ So surveillance is warranted for governmental use, but not private security. Perhaps little is changing and we should be relieved.

Reinhard (2002) observes that IT surveillance is unlikely to be accommodated in most legal systems, unless the law upgrades as quickly. In an ICT dominated environment that will almost certainly be a continuous and misunderstood process, easily misconstrued by juries. Since the market of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) grew exponentially last year and continues, surveillance has been Java enhanced and mobile computing will become commonplace. Unfortunately Internet library filtering, under those circumstances, cannot be humanly based: allowing private access to all kinds of information, sounds and videos unsuitable to children, who are unlikely to be the registered users of the PDAs. Surveillance of a virtual anonym is unlikely unless widespread use of existing email addresses are prominent among PDA users. But then surveillance of lost individuals, or those under governmental control, will be aided.

Li et al (2002) predicted that the advent of J2ME standardisation in PDA systems will be applicable to various handheld and mobile devices. So there will be both safety and danger to society. That has always been the case, except this will be without society’s observation of it. It is of interest that the originally useful Structured Query Language (SQL) is now, even under SQL2003, capable of standardized sequencing and columns with auto-generated values (including identity-columns). This is potentially an easy route to surveillance without permission or awareness: both passwords and code can be recognised and altered to suit a third-party. SQL is equally useful in both PDAs and desktop computers. My own home computer receives threats from SQL supporting software. The role of technology in surveillance has seldom been so auspicious, but it can work for both sides. The future of ICT surveillance is linguistically experimental as is all post-structuralist movement. Structuralism was envisaged a good while back by the Swiss de Saussure, but more recently disliked as the post-structuralist computational metrics and informational flow according to Böhm and Jacopini (1966:366).

Unfortunately, Raban (2006:34) noted we have become a surveillance society due to constant Internet access and other ICT means. He summarised Internet use with the ability of ‘the surveilled surveilling the surveiller who’s surveilling him.’ So surely almost continual surveillance is not a future we desire and learning should be a private and individually inclined matter.

Organisational learning and knowledge management

Organisational learning (OL) and Learning organisation (LO) are, according to Week 11’s Tsang (1997): OL ‘is a concept used to describe certain types of activity that takes place in an organization’ ...while LO... ‘refers to a particular type of organization in and of itself.’ Scarbrough et al (1999) state that OL is more nebulous, but then nebulosity provides talent outside of mathematics in society. But where would mathematics be without Argyris’s (1977) OL ‘detecting and correcting errors’?

Argyris and Schön’s (1978) Model 1 is traditional, with Model 2 being more modern and giving better association. It is interesting to compare that with Hurd’s (2005)

prediction that books are more educational than ICTs. This, with his calculation of the differences in governmental expenditure on library work and ICTs, should be noted as to whether older methods, Model 1s, of teaching are more effective. There is a difference between leadership and management. Model 1 is reflective of leadership, Model 2 of management. There is a likely difference in male and female performance using both models. Gladly, society is more equal now, but not across the Globe. Neither will ICT models be treated the same way by differing societies.

Senge's (1990) Fifth Discipline theory of team learning and constructive dialogue in Week 11 are certainly conducive of Model 2. The promotion of eLearning will not allow dialogue or team work to blossom. Knowledge management it is, but organisational learning it will not perform. Only Senge's systems thinking may flourish in Internet teaching methods. Hijazi (2004) is concerned about information equalling apprehension and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) understand that knowledge will only come as tacit and explicit. Corporate activity is not knowledge, it is instruction: promotion of ideologues is academic embellishment, not original thought. Nonaka and Takeuchi's knowledge management for innovation is a possibility, depending on managers determination. Leadership is not necessarily innovative in management so organisational learning and knowledge management will be computer and mathematically driven rather than human led. eLearning may at least be externally conceptualised or socially sympathised. A D-Centred firm at least may be an extended enterprise and pleasantly invigorating for the staff. OL and LO are experimental until the experiment concludes and with almost continual computer development that experiment is almost repetitively engaged.

Blumentritt and Johnston (1999) observed that 'knowledge management is emerging as a significant organizational and management challenge' in IT management. Holsapple and Lee-Post (2006) have recently examined the three stages of eLearning systems development: system design, system delivery, and system outcome. They found the results varying in each of these three stages. If the systems are always compatible, so too will be the eLearning. Fortunately, society has always been stronger with a variety of educations.

Summary

The benefits and harms of ICT to 21st Century society are both uncertain. The future we want is blissfully uncertain; surveillance we have always had, but it is becoming more widespread; learning of most sorts is what made society, although society is enhanced by differences, not by similarities: originality can never be learned just felt.

In relational terms of security, societal observation and privacy, namely the Information Age's future, organisational learning and knowledge management and surveillance, it is interesting to see the development of Internet2.

Words: 1932 (excluding Glossary and References)

Glossary

The Industrial Revolution

Spanned around 150 years, taking place during the last 50 years of the 18th Century and the majority of the 19th Century.

de Saussure, Ferdinand (1857-1913)

Swiss linguistics scholar who was one of the originators of structuralism.

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