social implications of the internet (I)

the 'death of distance'

where will we live, work, and learn?

in the global village, stupid!
determinism once more

... this age of ours ... when the pulsations of electricity vibrate and throb around this earth, uniting nations as one family by those powerful yet sensitive bonds wrought by science and riveted by man's quenchless thirst for still higher and better achievements.

Morris S. Wise, Trade-marks and Trade-mark Law, 1898

"Electric circuitry has overthrown the regime of 'time' and 'space' and pours upon us instantly and continuously concerns of all other men. It has reconstituted dialogue on a global scale. Its message is Total Change, ending psychic, social, economic, and political parochialism. . . . Ours is a brand-new world of allatonceness. 'Time' has ceased, 'space' has vanished. We now live in a global village . . . a simultaneous happening."

Marshall Mcluhan et al., Medium is the Massage, 1967
determinism again

"If the presence of electricity can be made visible in any desired part of the circuit, I see no reason why intelligence may not be instantaneously transmitted by electricity to any distance."
--Samuel Morse

"the cost of communicating ideas ... is now distance-free"
--Frances Cairncross
Cairncross's determined trendspotting

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
improved connections

"Most people on earth will eventually have access to networks that are interactive and broadband. The Internet will continue to exist in its present form, but will also carry many other services, including telephone and television." -- Cairncross

Imagine a magical device that could boost entrepreneurship and economic activity, provide an alternative to bad roads and unreliable postal services, widen farmers’ access to markets, and allow swift and secure transfers of money. Now stop imagining: the device in question is the mobile phone. – *The Economist*, July 2005

The idea gap, --Paul Romer
national unity

"The establishment of the telegraph is ... the best response to the publicists who think that France is too large to form a Republic. The telegraph shortens distances and, in a way, brings an immense population together at a single point." --Claude Chappe, 1793

"at bottom, this invention might suffice to make possible the establishment of democracy among a large population ... no reason why it would not be possible for all the citizens of France to communicate their will ... in such a way that this communication might be considered instantaneous."--Alexandre Vandermond, 1795
single pulse

"Tomorrow the hearts of the civilized world will beat in a single pulse, and from that time forth forevermore the continental divisions of the earth will, in a measure, lose those conditions of time and distance which now mark their relations. ... The Atlantic has dried up and we become in reality as well as wish, one country."

*Times*
global peace

"the great chain that will bring all civilized nations into instantaneous communication ... the most potent of all the means of civilization, and the most effective in breaking down the barriers of evil prejudice and custom"

_Hunt's Merchants' Magazine_, 1868

"the hand of progress beckons .... a rivet is loosened from the chains of the oppressed"

_Commercial and Financial Chronicle_, 1865
"The accumulation of many large manufacturing establishments in the same district has a tendency to bring together purchasers or their agents from great distances, and thus to cause the institution of a public mart or exchange. This contributes to diffuse information relative to the supply of raw materials, and the state of demand for their produce, with which it is necessary manufacturers should be well acquainted. The very circumstance of collecting periodically, at one place, a large number both of those who supply the market and of those who require its produce, tends strongly to check the accidental fluctuations to which a small market is always subject, as well as to render the average of the prices much more uniform." --Charles Babbage 1791-1871
In an early stage of civilization every place had to depend on its own resources for most of the heavy wares which it consumed;

Consequently the lighter and more expensive articles of dress and personal adornment, together with spices and some kinds of metal implements used by all classes, and many other things for the special use of the rich, often came from astonishing distances.

This elementary localization of industry gradually prepared the way for many of the modern developments of division of labour.
the super-American city

"Air and earth form an ant-hill, veined by channels of traffic, rising storey upon storey. Overhead-trains, overground-trains, underground-trains, pneumatic express-mails ... chains of motor vehicles. ... Each person has nothing but quite definite tasks. The various professions are concentrated at definite places. ... Amusements are concentrated in other parts of the city. And elsewhere again are the towers to which one returns and finds wife, family, gramophone, and soul. Tension and relaxation, activity and love are meticulously kept separate. ... And man needs no more for his happiness ... Besides, zoology makes it clear that a sum of reduced individuals may very well form a totality of genius."

--Robert Musil, A Man without Qualities c. 1920s
ELECTRICAL ENTERTAINMENT: A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

By Dr. Alfred N. Goldsmith

Dr. Goldsmith of the Radio Corporation Predicts an Instrument Which at a Touch of the Fingers Will Bring to the Home Scenes and Sound, Color Symphonies, or a Keyboard for Self-Created Music

The Rise of Radio

Yet when we consider the answer to most problems and advance the understanding of the age, there is no more powerful reason for the belief that the only way is a broadly called electrical entertainment, or of which radio is the greatest possible present experiment. Perhaps a brief outline of the functions of radio will show clearly what electrical entertainment actually holds the key to the future.

In construing entertainment material, human psychology must always be in mind. Man is not only the present but also, in his future growth, the future. We desire to see and hear not only the things of the past but the things we can create through the power of the new era. Electrically speaking, the past and present is all we want, and becomes a focus of history. For many the past is to be very well; they are not stupid, and if perfected in the present the future for us is material.

For art to produce ideal entertainment, music is not so easy. We always hope for the “perfect performance.” Here it is better to enjoy a medium of entertainment which permits repeated efforts until finally the most nearly perfect record is obtained. This minimized and approved record represents the best performance of which the artist is capable. And if taken at all, even ready to live again at a touch of the fingers on the controlling switch.

Amusingly Wholesome

There is another fundamental need, therefore satisfying those who desire to extend the artist’s performance and those who want another cannot do so.

Electrical Instruments

A small group of electrical musical instruments have appeared on the market within the last few years, held by the United States and in Europe the future forms, some of them being simply an electrically operated phonograph with strings or various combinations of stringed and electrically operated instruments. The forms in which the public has yet seen are not simple or mechanical, yet they hold the same of music if they will they will be further developed. Great inventors will have to improve them and equalize their interesting possibilities of tone quality, volume, flexibility of touch, and pitch. And, finally, virtuous performances on these instruments will then spring up and the performances which have been composed for the future.

The electric control of mobile color is a new development of the age of home and auditorium instruments which are already well-grounded. Examples of these are the Colortone Company and the National Electrical Products Corporation. The Colortone Company is composed of electrically operated instruments which are self-operated. These color motion pictures are produced on a pre-determined fashion from records, or by an individual view, or by a combination of electrically operated instruments.
work and learning

Many various causes have led to the localization of industries; but the chief causes have been physical conditions.

Another chief cause has been the patronage of a court.

These immigrants taught us how to weave woollen and worsted stuffs, though for a long time we sent our cloths to the Netherlands to be fulled and dyed. They taught us how to cure herrings, how to manufacture silk, how to make lace, glass, and paper, and to provide for many other of our wants.

But how did these immigrants learn their skill?
When an industry has thus chosen a locality for itself, it is likely to stay there long: so great are the advantages which people following the same skilled trade get from near neighbourhood to one another. The mysteries of the trade become no mysteries; but are as it were in the air, and children learn many of them unconsciously. Good work is rightly appreciated, inventions and improvements in machinery, in processes and the general organization of the business have their merits promptly discussed: if one man starts a new idea, it is taken up by others and combined with suggestions of their own; and thus it becomes the source of further new ideas. And presently subsidiary trades grow up in the neighbourhood, supplying it with implements and materials, organizing its traffic, and in many ways conducing to the economy of its material.
end of localization?

Every cheapening of the means of communication ... alters the action of the forces which tend to localize industries. Speaking generally we must say that a lowering of tariffs, or of freights for the transport of goods, tends to make each locality buy more largely from a distance what it requires; and thus tends to concentrate particular industries in special localities: but on the other hand everything that increases people's readiness to migrate from one place to another tends to bring skilled artisans to ply their crafts near to the consumers who will purchase their wares. These two opposing tendencies are well illustrated by the recent
information & the villagio
"The University of Winnemac ... [has] twelve thousand students; beside this prodigy Oxford is a tiny theological school and Harvard a select college for young gentlemen. The University has a baseball field under glass; its buildings are measured by the mile; it hires hundreds of young Doctors of Philosophy to give rapid instruction in Sanskrit, navigation, accountancy, spectacle-fitting, sanitary engineering, Provençal poetry, tariff schedules, rutabaga-growing, motor-car designing, the history of Voronezh, the style of Matthew Arnold, the diagnosis of myohypertrophia kymoparalytica, and department store advertising. Its president is the best money-raiser, the best after-dinner speaker in the United States; and Winnemac was the first school in the world to conduct its extension courses by radio."

--Sinclair Lewis, *Arrowsmith*
the end of the university?

a "stagnant" sector --William Baumol

against stagnation
Alvin Toffler

Peter Drucker

John Chambers

Israeli Entrepreneur Plans a Free Global University That Will Be Online Only

we can make a free university for students all over the world, anyone who speaks English and has an Internet connection

January 26, 2009
"We sometimes view distance education too narrowly, as merely a way to save money. We should expand our vision ...
... and look for opportunities to make money."


Open University
early morning television
kinds of distance

extension courses

correspondence degrees

the Open University
going global

the mega universities

Indira Gandhi (New Delhi) : 2 million
Allama Iqbal (Islamabad) : 1.8 million
Islamic Azad (Tehran) : 1.3 million
"open" again

* Arizona State University
* College of Eastern Utah
* Dixie State College of Utah
* Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
* Kaplan Higher Education
* Massachusetts Institute of Technology
* Michigan State University
* Open Institute of Law, Int.
* Tufts University
* UC Berkeley
* University of Alaska Fairbanks
* University of California, Irvine
* University of Massachusetts Boston
* University of Michigan
* University of Notre Dame
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