



UC Berkeley School of Information

Virtual Pollutions

History of Information 103

Geoff Nunberg

April 29, 2010



Itinerary, 4/29

The problems of "rotten information"

The pervasion of hate speech

The porn problem – what's to be done?

A crisis in civility?

That's a wrap...



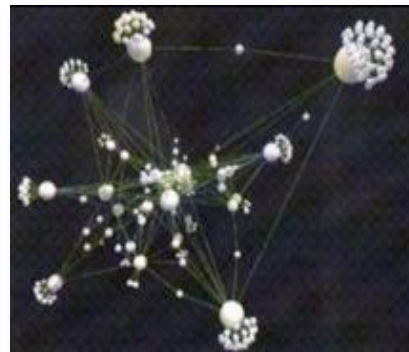
Spatial Models of Electronic Discourse: "Cyberspace"



The New Jerusalem, ca. 1992

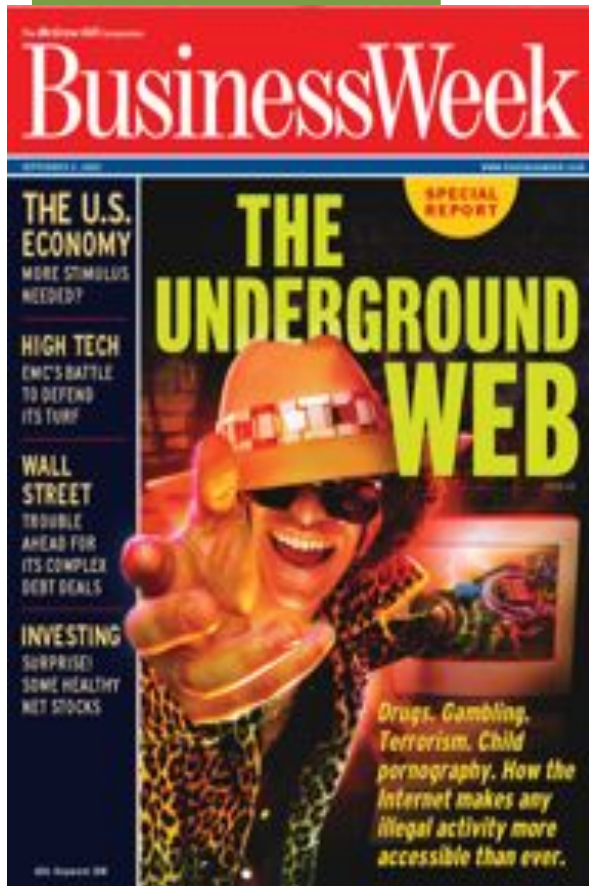
Cyberspace: A world in which the global traffic of knowledge, secrets, measurements, indicators, and alter-human agency takes on form: sights, sounds, presences never seen on the surface of the earth blossoming in a vast electronic night. . . . From vast databases that constitute the culture's deposited wealth, every document is available, every recording is playable, and every picture is viewable. The realm of pure information, filling like a lake.

— Michael Benedikt, Introduction to Cyberspace, MIT Press, 1991





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"

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

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...



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"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.

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. If you do not exclude them from the Constitution, in less than 200 years they will do great numbers that they will do to 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/cille1.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. ...
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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 ...
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[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, I 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=10724195882](#) - [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=165](#) - [Cached](#)

[Judenbass 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.judenbass.com/judenbass.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.biblebelievers.org.au/c/1161.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-and-internet.html - Cached - Similar

US Founding Fathers' Statements Concerning the Jews
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Americans Wake Up: Zionists & Israel ruling America
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www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=10724195862 - Cached - Similar

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

Judenhaus 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.judenhaus.com/quotes.html - Cached - Similar

Try Beta Gasala my talk my preferences my ...

article discussion edit this page

The Call for Participation for Wikimania 2011 has been 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 ...

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

Introduction

This article, which thoroughly documents the history of the hoax 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" is 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 ...



Pervasiveness of racism

Links to other racist sites:

Fig. 1 (3 views). A Dinarized German from Heidelberg; although his face shows in exaggerated degree all of the criteria of Dinarization, the great size of his cranial vault is unusual for Dinarics and implies the presence of unreduced Upper Palaeolithic factors. This individual might be called a Noric, since the Mediterranean element contained is unquestionably Nordic, and probably Nordic of the Corded variety.



Fig. 2 (3 views). A Noric from Berlin; the shallow nasion depression, and the great height and salience of the nose are especially noticeable here. Norics are extremely common in eastern Germany.



Fig. 3 (3 views). A Noric Pole from Galicia, western Poles.



WHITE PRIDE WORLD WIDE

Paul Fromm Stormfront.org
Coming to You Every Day
12:00 AM EST
"When you silence the Men of the Word,
you will have to deal with the Men of the Sword."

Stormfront Broadcast Radio - Monday, September 10

When radio call-ins activated: (214)-329-WPWW or Skype	Music Radio Tuneful Schedule EDT 5-7am - Downunder Radio- -7-9pm in E. Australia 10pm - Old Timey Arrangements 11pm - Lycia's Celtic	Townhall Talk Schedule EDT 8-10pm - Political Cesspool 12am - Paul Fromm 1am - Jamie Kelso
StormfrontRadio Click Below to Hear the Stream Live: Listen Live Live NOW: Paul Fromm on the air "For Our People" from Port		

Linking singles of European descent around the world...

EURODATELINK

Sign Up Now It's FREE!

Search	Login
Gender Not Specified	Nickname
Country Not specified	Password
<input type="button" value="go"/>	<input type="button" value="go"/>

ica, Europe and around



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?



An Awkward Search Result

The screenshot shows a Google search results page for the query "jew". The search bar at the top contains the word "jew" and the Google logo is on the left. Navigation links for "Web", "Images", "Groups", "News", "Froogle", "Local", and "more" are visible. The search results are categorized under "Web" and show "Results 1 - 100 of about 12,300,000 for jew [d]".

The first result is titled "Offensive Search Results" and includes a link to www.google.com/explanation with the text "We're disturbed about these results as well. Please read our note here." This is marked as a "Sponsored Link".

The second result is "Jew - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia", with a description: "Discussion of the difference between Jewish religion and ethnicity, with notes on the Jews' history, beliefs, and culture." It includes a link to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew and is dated "Sep 13, 2005".

The third result is "Jew Watch - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia", with a description: "According to its supporters, Jew Watch 'reports accurate information regarding ... Jew Watch features an archive of opinion, writings, articles and links, ...". It includes a link to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew_Watch.

The fourth result is "Jew Watch", with a description: "Keeping a close watch on Jewish communities, organizations, monopoly, banking, and media control worldwide." It includes a link to www.jewwatch.com/.

The fifth result is "Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews", with a description: "Rabin was assassinated in 1995 by a right-wing orthodox Jew. Abraham Hecht has been quoted as citing Jewish scripture to justify the killing. ...". It includes a link to www.jewwatch.com/jew-atrocities-jewsagainstjews.html.

On the right side of the page, there are several additional links: "Are Jews free", "Focus on An", "Scary Horses", "No Millionaire", and "The World's J".



An Awkward Search Result

The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the search term "Jew". The search results are displayed in a list format. The first result is "Jew Watch" with the description "Keeping a close watch on Jewish communities, organizations, monopoly, banking, and media control worldwide." and the URL "www.jewwatch.com/". The second result is "Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews" with the description "Rabin was assassinated in 1995 by a right-wing orthodox Jew. Abraham Hecht has been quoted as citing Jewish scripture to justify the killing. ..." and the URL "www.jewwatch.com/jew-atrocities-jewsagainstjews.html". The third result is "Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews" with the same description and URL. The fourth result is "Jew Watch" with the same description and URL. The fifth result is "Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews" with the same description and URL. The sixth result is "Jew Watch" with the same description and URL. The seventh result is "Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews" with the same description and URL. The eighth result is "Jew Watch" with the same description and URL. The ninth result is "Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews" with the same description and URL. The tenth result is "Jew Watch" with the same description and URL.

Google Web Images Groups News Froogle Local more »
Search Advanced Search Preferences

Web

Offensive Search Results
www.google.com/explanations/

Jew - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Discussion of the different meanings of the word Jew, its history, beliefs, and culture.
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew

Jew Watch - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
According to its signature, it features an archive of anti-Semitic propaganda.
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew_Watch
[More results from Wikipedia]

Jew Watch
Keeping a close watch on Jewish communities, organizations, monopoly, banking, and media control worldwide.
www.jewwatch.com/ - 32k - Cached - Similar pages

Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews
Rabin was assassinated in 1995 by a right-wing orthodox Jew. Abraham Hecht has been quoted as citing Jewish scripture to justify the killing. ...
www.jewwatch.com/jew-atrocities-jewsagainstjews.html - 8k - Cached - Similar pages
[More results from www.jewwatch.com]

Judaism 101: Who is a Jew?

Jew Watch - Jewish Atrocities - Jews Against Jews
Rabin was assassinated in 1995 by a right-wing orthodox Jew. Abraham Hecht has been quoted as citing Jewish scripture to justify the killing. ...
www.jewwatch.com/jew-atrocities-jewsagainstjews.html - 8k - Cached - Similar pages
[More results from www.jewwatch.com]

Judaism 101: Who is a Jew?

other anti right wing
dontblamejews

The World's Largest
A fun photo riddle
to Jewish people
www.GinAnd



Google's Explanation



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. We'd like to explain why you're seeing these results when you conduct this search. 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. ...



The Menace of Pornography



The dangers 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 and leafing through the occasional *Penthouse* they stumbled across in the garage, 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



"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 e-business managed protection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Protecting from threats both inside and out. Anti-virus, security audits, firewalls, VPN, anything you need. ■ Cutting-edge products like McAfee, CyberCop, GuardNet and PSP are customized to your company's exact needs, then managed remotely. ■ Need another reason to believe? myCIO.com is 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.



Feeding the Filtering Frenzy



Ad for McAfee's GuardDog software



Legal Solutions

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 (cf site on St. Augustine)

Need to block IP numbers – collateral damage due to virtual hosting

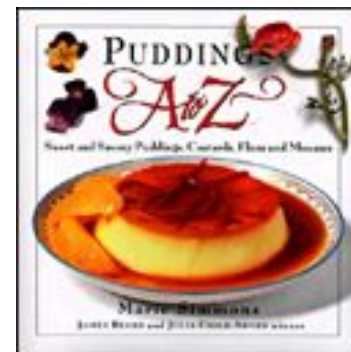
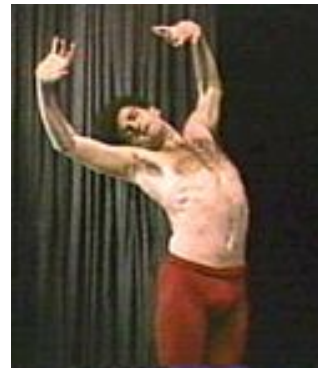
"Loophole" sites: translation sites, anonymizer sites, Google cache & images (classified as "pornography" by N2H2)

Inherent trade-offs of precision and recall



Limits of Image Classification

Images found "Probably Objectionable" by WVIPE
(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.

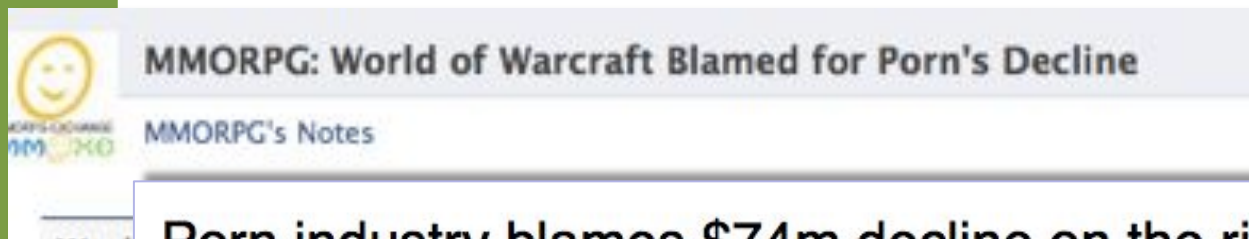
Parents can assume responsibility for monitoring kids' surfing.

Providers can offer "greenspace" browsers for kids



Social & Institutional Responses

Even porn can get old...



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



Porn Flounders, But Adult Novelty Business Booms

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

Text Size



The New Incivility



The Rise of Incivility

"The happiest and most peaceful parts of the World Wide Web are the places where people are buying things. The nasty parts of the Web are where people are doing what the Founding Surfers intended: expressing themselves and forming communities. Have you visited cyberspace lately? As a friendly place to hang out, give me meatspace any day."

Michael Kinsley, *Cybercreeps Run Amok*, 2005



The Rise of Incivility

Technological explanations

...because email is such a casual means of communication, it privileges those who prize informality. What happened to "Dear Sir", "Yours faithfully" and the bracing pleasures of a firm handshake? I ask. They died, you reply, but nobody bothered to tell you, granddad. Stuart Jeffries, *The Guardian*

...maybe banging out an e-mail is just so easy, compared with all the necessary elements of writing a letter, that the id can send out a half-dozen e-mails before the superego can stop it. Michael Kinsley

What "flamers" have in common with the digit-wagging driver, with the talk-show callers, is not just their aerobic exercise of the "freedom of speech." They belong, rather, to the growing uncommunity of people who now act with the protection of anonymity. Ellen Goodman 1999

Or is everybody just snarkier these days?



The Rise of Incivility



A New Phenomenon?

So where did all the civility go?... I keep coming back to my long-standing hunch that it all began to go bad around 1965. That was the year that America, suddenly, became postmodern. Many venerable American traditions -- some wonderful, some horrible -- all vanished at the same time.

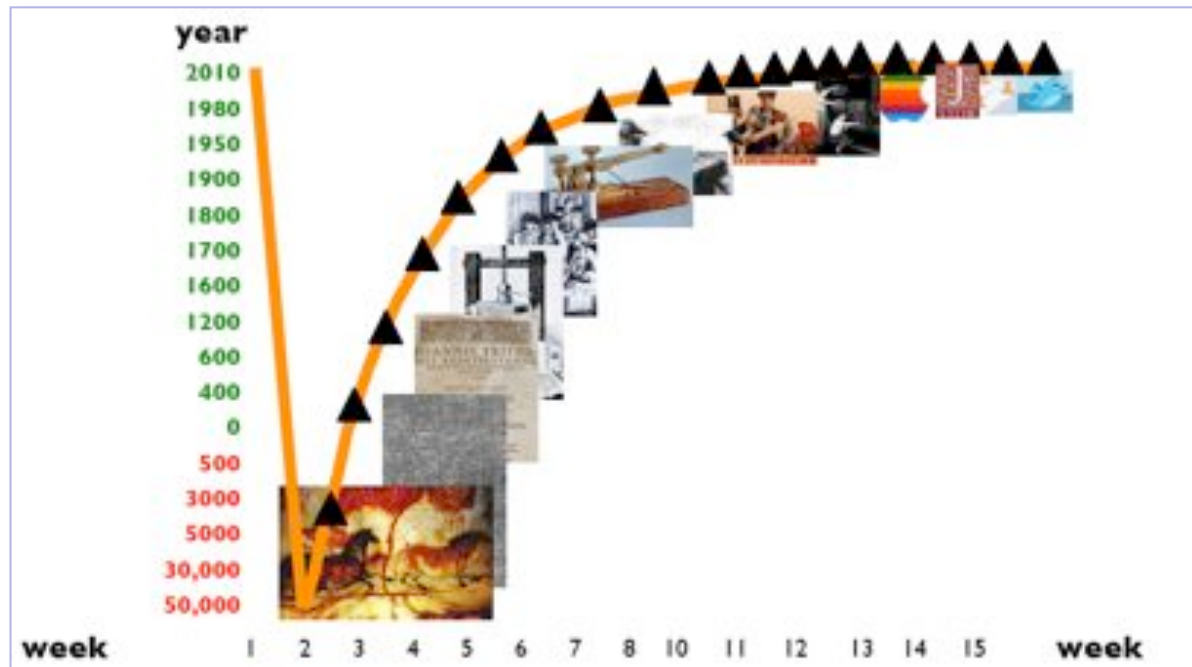
Stephen Carter, *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy*



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?





Good-bye and good luck