



UC Berkeley School of Information

Information: The Making of an Age

Concepts of information i218
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Words structure cultural formations

literacy: knowledge of letters; condition in respect to education, esp. ability to read and write (1893)

economic literacy 1943

functional literacy: 1954

cultural literacy: ca. 1990

Also: *literacy rate*, *literacy campaign*, etc.

literacy arises in US, implicates a complex relation between education, class, knowledge, citizenship, and the role of the state in culture



"Information" as a cultural formation

Implications of *information* in its collocations & oppositions:

information explosion, gap, storage, system, transfer, work; - gathering, -giving, -seeking; information processing, information retrieval, information revolution, information science, information technology, information overload, information rich, information warfare.

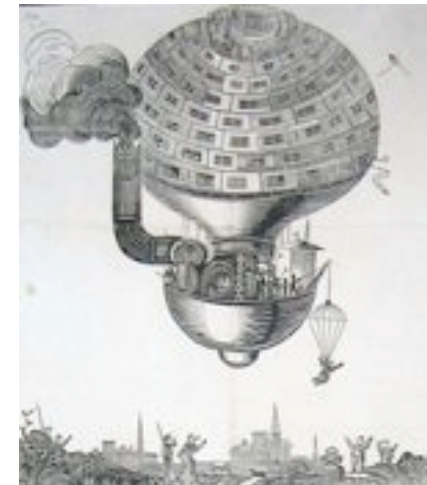
Not to mention *information age, information society, information anxiety, information glut, information haves & have-nots* etc.

information in its semantic oppositions to *data, knowledge, wisdom...*

I.e.: *information* implicates a semantic field or conceptual scheme



Every Age Gets the Future it Needs

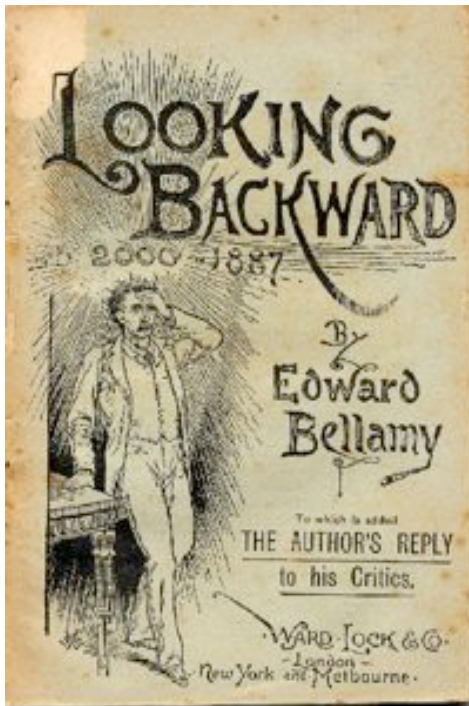


"Ballon-monstre, 1837





American Utopianism



"With a tear for the dark past, turn we then to the dazzling future, and, veiling our eyes, press forward. The long and weary winter of the race is ended. Its summer has begun. Humanity has burst the chrysalis. The heavens are before it."



Technological Utopianism: 1880-1930



Milo Hastings, "City of Endless Night" (Berlin, 2041), 1920



Edgar Chambless, "Roadtown," 1910

"Instead of college, there will be an industrial university. Pounding literature into the head of a natural-born mechanic is both an economic and mental waste."
Roadtown

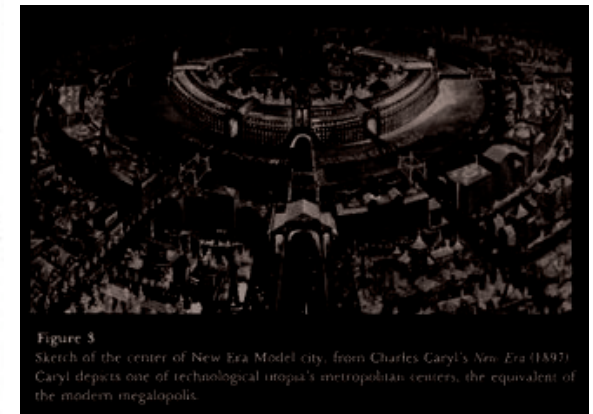


Figure 3
Sketch of the center of New Era Model city, from Charles Garry's *New Era* (1892). Garry depicts one of technological utopia's metropolitan centers, the equivalent of the modern megalopolis.



Every Age Gets the Future it Needs



Norman Bel Geddes, General Motors
Futurama, 1939 World's Fair

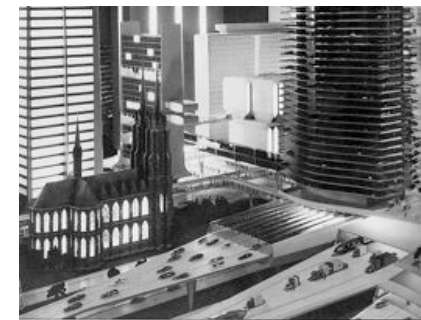




Every Age Gets the Future it Needs



General Motors Futurama, 1964 World's Fair






Every Age Gets the Future it Needs

Popular Mechanics Magazine
REGISTERED IN U. S. PATENT OFFICE AND CANADA
WRITTEN SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND IT

Vol. 72 AUGUST, 1939 No. 2

The ELECTRIC HOME of the FUTURE




By George H. Bucher
President, Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company

SPARKS leap from your fingertips when you walk across a carpeted floor. Lightning strikes from the sky. Water changes to steam and giant turbines whirl magnets within magnets to light the world and drive its machines.

Because man has tamed this invisible, omnipresent electric force and harnessed it to his tasks, today's civilization depends almost for its very existence upon its uninterrupted flow.

Electric power moves silently, ceaselessly, over thousands of miles of wires leading from more than 1,650 central power stations in the United States. It comes into our homes and factories and offices with such dependability that we take it for granted.




Bottom, cooking ham sandwich in high-frequency radio waves. This method may be common in the home of the future

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Westinghouse Electric Home of the Future, 1939

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separate centers of electrification. Tomorrow's electric home will be built around the electric power supply and appliances. To achieve this ultimate in electrical living will require the resources of research, engineering and manufacturing knowledge and experience.

This future home will probably be equipped with a number of control centers, from any one of which the homemaker can give her commands to appliances at work in the kitchen and laundry. Electric ranges already are equipped with automatic controls for temperature and cooking time, but there is no practical reason why these operations together with the other appliances cannot be controlled remotely from any room in the house. Perhaps short-wave radio may be utilized for this purpose, as well as for answering the doorbell and receiving visitors by transmitting a



1. Refrigerator 2. Freezer 3. Dishwasher 4. Sink 5. Range 6. Sink 7. Range 8. Sink 9. Range 10. Sink 11. Range 12. Sink 13. Range 14. Sink 15. Range 16. Sink 17. Range 18. Sink 19. Range 20. Sink 21. Range 22. Sink 23. Range 24. Sink 25. Range 26. Sink 27. Range 28. Sink 29. Range 30. Sink 31. Range 32. Sink 33. Range 34. Sink 35. Range 36. Sink 37. Range 38. Sink 39. Range 40. Sink 41. Range 42. Sink 43. Range 44. Sink 45. Range 46. Sink 47. Range 48. Sink 49. Range 50. Sink 51. Range 52. Sink 53. Range 54. Sink 55. Range 56. Sink 57. Range 58. Sink 59. Range 60. Sink 61. Range 62. Sink 63. Range 64. Sink 65. Range 66. Sink 67. Range 68. Sink 69. Range 70. Sink 71. Range 72. Sink 73. Range 74. Sink 75. Range 76. Sink 77. Range 78. Sink 79. Range 80. Sink 81. Range 82. Sink 83. Range 84. Sink 85. Range 86. Sink 87. Range 88. Sink 89. Range 90. Sink 91. Range 92. Sink 93. Range 94. Sink 95. Range 96. Sink 97. Range 98. Sink 99. Range 100. Sink 101. Range 102. Sink 103. Range 104. Sink 105. Range 106. Sink 107. Range 108. Sink 109. Range 110. Sink 111. Range 112. Sink 113. Range 114. Sink 115. Range 116. Sink 117. Range 118. Sink 119. Range 120. Sink 121. Range 122. Sink 123. Range 124. Sink 125. Range 126. Sink 127. Range 128. Sink 129. Range 130. Sink 131. Range 132. Sink 133. Range 134. Sink 135. Range 136. Sink 137. Range 138. Sink 139. Range 140. Sink 141. Range 142. Sink 143. Range 144. Sink 145. Range 146. Sink 147. Range 148. Sink 149. Range 150. Sink 151. Range 152. Sink 153. Range 154. Sink 155. Range 156. Sink 157. Range 158. Sink 159. Range 160. Sink 161. Range 162. Sink 163. Range 164. Sink 165. Range 166. Sink 167. Range 168. Sink 169. Range 170. Sink 171. Range 172. Sink 173. Range 174. Sink 175. Range 176. Sink 177. Range 178. Sink 179. Range 180. Sink 181. Range 182. Sink 183. Range 184. Sink 185. Range 186. Sink 187. Range 188. Sink 189. Range 190. Sink 191. Range 192. Sink 193. Range 194. Sink 195. Range 196. Sink 197. Range 198. Sink 199. 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Range 1652. Sink 1653. Range 1654. Sink 1655. Range 1656. Sink 1657. Range 1658. Sink 1659. Range 1660. Sink 1661. Range 1662. Sink 1663. Range 1664. Sink 1665. Range 1666. Sink 1667. Range 1668. Sink 1669. Range 1670. Sink 1671. Range 1672. Sink 1673. Range 1674. Sink 1675. Range 1676. Sink 1677. Range 1678. Sink 1679. Range 1680. Sink 1681. Range 1682. Sink 1683. Range 1684. Sink 1685. Range 1686. Sink 1687. Range 1688. Sink 1689. Range 1690. Sink 1691. Range 1692. Sink 1693. Range 1694. Sink 1695. Range 1696. Sink 1697. Range 1698. Sink 1699. Range 1700. Sink 1701. Range 1702. Sink 1703. Range 1704. Sink 1705. Range 1706. Sink 1707. Range 1708. Sink 1709. Range 1710. Sink 1711. Range 1712. Sink 1713. Range 1714. Sink 1715. Range 1716. Sink 1717. Range 1718. Sink 1719. Range 1720. Sink 1721. Range 1722. Sink 1723. Range 1724. Sink 1725. Range 1726. Sink 1727. Range 1728. Sink 1729. Range 1730. Sink 1731. Range 1732. Sink 1733. Range 1734. Sink 1735. Range 1736. Sink 1737. 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Every Age Gets the Future it Needs



Monsanto, House of the Future, Disneyland, 1957
"Everything is ultra-modern and almost entirely synthetic."



Philco, 1967 ("1999")



Plastics!

"The American of tomorrow, clothed in plastics from head to foot, will live in a plastics house, drive a plastics auto, and fly in a plastics airplane." *Popular Mechanics*, 1940

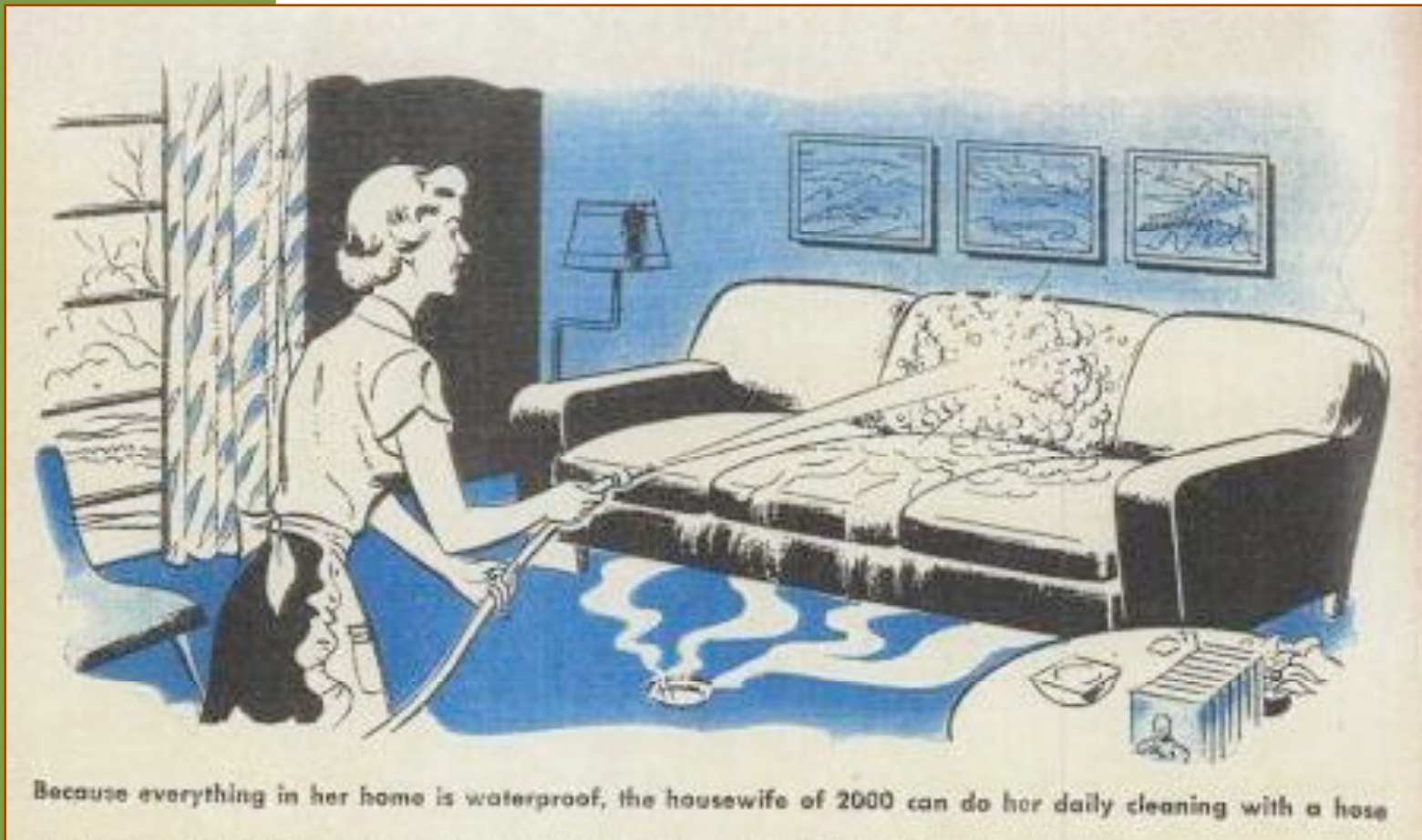


Figure 3
Industrial designer Carl W. Sundberg tantalized Americans with this vision of an all-plastic auto trailer/camper/motorboat shell. *Modern Plastics* 22 (May 1945), p. 106.





Plastics!



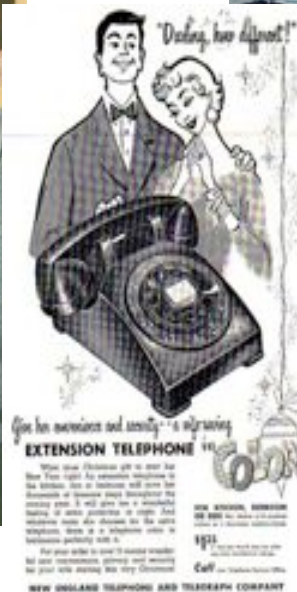


Plastics!





Looking for the Roots of "Modernity"





Looking for the Roots of "Modernity"





The Curve of "Modernity"

The March Of Progress

