



history of information

introduction (2)

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Thurs, 11:30-1:00





information history a paradox?

information

"of an age"

or

"for all time"



information history a paradox?



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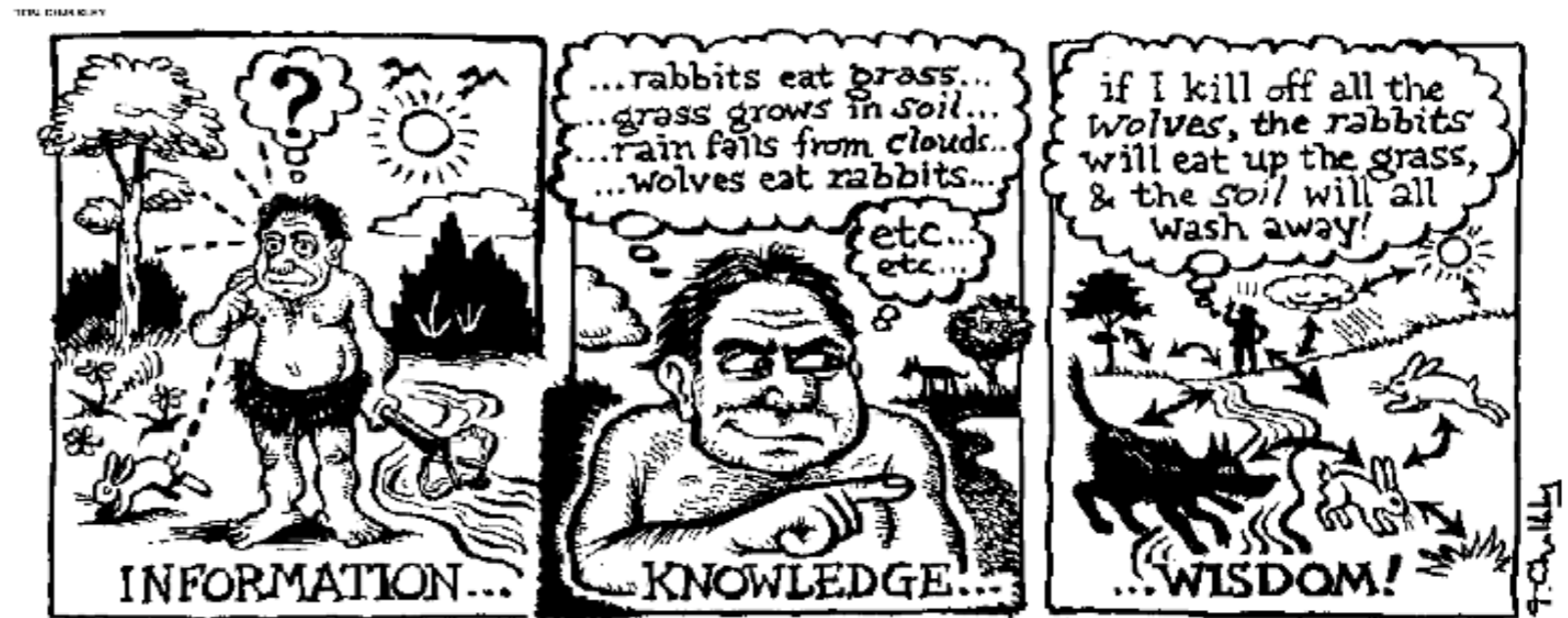
for all time?

"Every society is an information society and every organization an information organization, just as every organism is an information organism. Information is necessary to organize and run everything from a cell to General Motors or the Pentagon"

Anthony Oettinger, 1980



for all time?





for all time?



"On an average weekday, the *New York Times* contains more information than any contemporary of Shakespeare's would have acquired in a lifetime"



for all time?

information as the dynamo of history?

"The need for readily available information, which had been steadily rising, was accelerated by the advent of Christianity ..."

"The need to find information more rapidly than is possible in a papyrus-roll-form book initiated the development of the Greco-Roman codex in the second century ..."

Frederick Kilgour,
The Evolution of the Book, 1998



for all time?

"Glittering proof that a new **information age** was dawning in Europe, fuelled by the power of the printed word"

Stephen Fry,
The Machine That Made Us. BBC 2008

[YouTube]



for all time?



"The day the universe changed"

James Burke,
Printing Transforms Knowledge
BBC 1986

[Media Center]



or 'of an age'?

ages for ages
stone, iron, bronze,
silver, gold,
agricultural, industrial, machine

"Not an Heroical, Devotional,
Philosophical, or Moral Age, but above
all others the Mechanical Age.

It is the Age of Machinery."

Thomas Carlyle, "Sign of the Times", 1829



agism

"The world now taking shape is not only new but new in entirely new ways."

Richard J. Barnet,

"Defining the Moment" *New Yorker* 1990

"Today's students think and process information fundamentally differently, and these differences ... run much deeper than most educators would like to have it. "

Edith Ackermann,

"Anthropology of Digital Natives" 2008



how do we know?



how do we know?

**Cheney: Obama Inauguration
Historic, Exciting**



how do we know?


**Cheney: Obama Inauguration
Historic, Exciting**

Obama takes historic spot as first black
president



how do we know?


Cheney: Obama Inauguration Historic, Exciting



Obama takes historic spot as first black president



A Long Day Steeped in Pomp, History and Emotion





how do we know?

Cheney: Obama Inauguration Historic, Exciting

"What should they know of England

Who only England know?"

Rudyard Kipling,

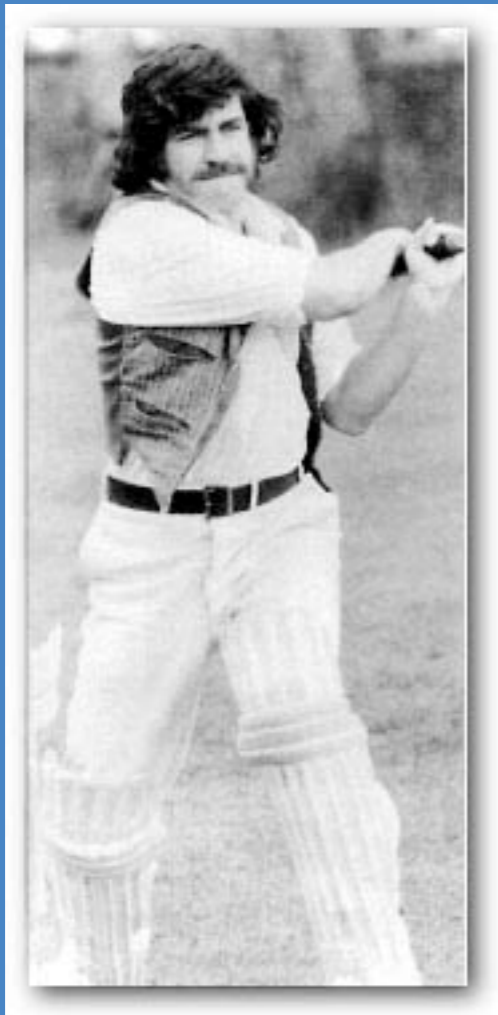
"The English Flag" 1899

Obama takes historic spot as first black president

A Long Day Steeped in Pomp, History and Emotion



looking backwards



"The past is another country.
They do things differently there."
L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, 1953



pitfalls

condescension of posterity
trashing the past

selling the present

"Information: there's growing agreement
it's the name of the age we live in"

IBM ad, 1977



what do people think about the present?

"The real, central theme of history is not what happened, but what people felt about it when it was happening"

George M Young,
*Victorian England:
Portrait of an Age,*
1960

To coincide with this year's Reith Lectures, entitled the **Triumph of Technology**, You and Yours asked what has been the most significant technological innovation since 1800.

From the hundreds of listeners' nominations and together with our five experts, voting was opened on a final 10. Here are the results...

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/youandyours/technology_launch.shtml]



what do people think about the present?



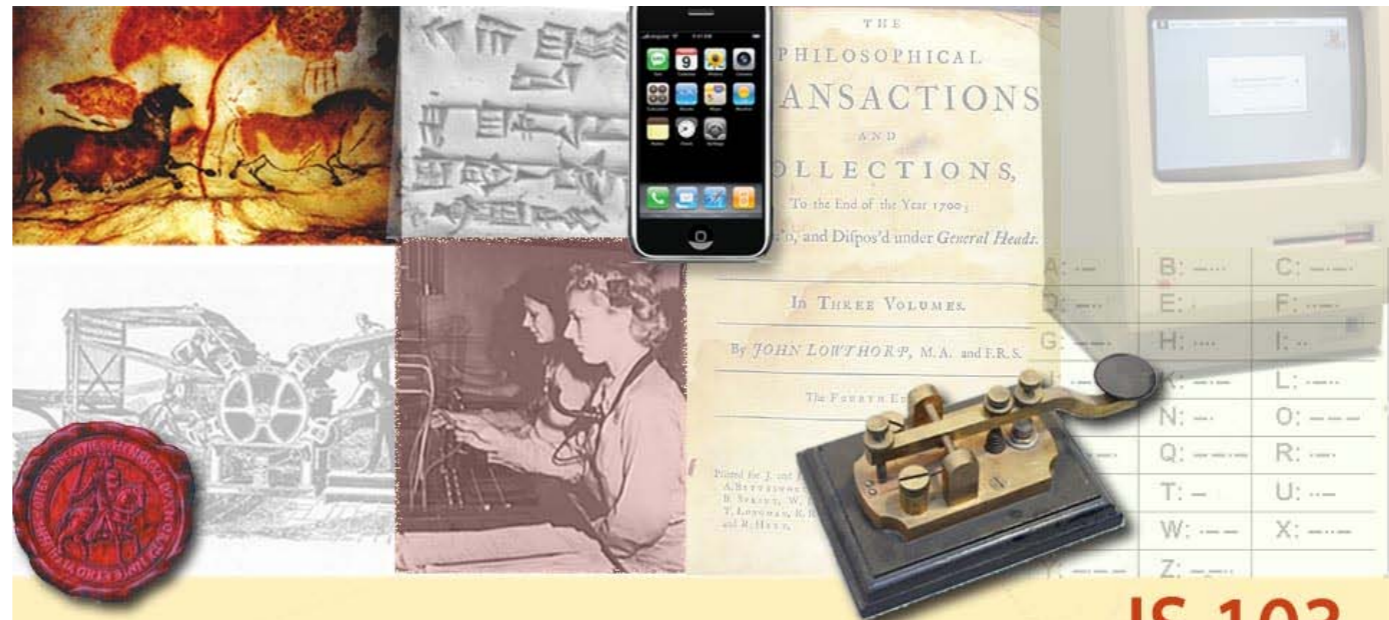
- 59.4% - Bicycle**
- 7.8% - Transistor**
- 7.8% - Electro-magnetic induction ring**
- 6.3% - Computer**
- 4.6% - Germ theory of infection**
- 4.5% - Radio**
- 4.0% - Internet**
- 3.4% - Internal Combustion Engine**
- 1.1% - Nuclear Power**
- 1.1% - Communications satellite**



and so to bicycles ...

History of Information Syllabus

<http://courses.ischool.berkeley.edu/i103/s09/HOFI09.html>



IS 103

HISTORY OF INFORMATION

PROFESSORS DUGUID & NUNBERG



assignment

The papers by Heilbroner and Bijker take opposite sides of the argument about technological determinism. Decide which one wins the argument. Say, within a 200 words, what in the paper clinched the argument for you. Be prepared to defend your decision in class. If you cannot decide who wins, say why and again be prepared to defend your judgement.