



UC Berkeley School of Information



The Internet: Social Effects

History of Information 103
Geoff Nunberg

April 27, 2010



Itinerary, 4/27

The Internet and "virtual community"

One world language?

Social life in a virtual world

Reinforcing Social Divisions?

Is the Internet a place?



The Internet: Social Consequences

Does the internet build communities or
fragment them?



The Internet: Social Consequences

Does the internet build communities or
fragment them?

Yes.



Social Effects of the Internet

Cairncross's determined trendspotting

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Death of distance | 14. Manufacturers as Service Providers |
| 2. Fate of Location | 15. Inversion of Home and Office |
| 3. Improved Connections | 16. Proliferation of Ideas |
| 4. Increased Mobility | 17. Decline of National Authority |
| 5. More Customized Networks | 18. Loss of Privacy |
| 6. Deluge of Information | 19. Global Premium for Skills |
| 7. Increased Value of Brand | 20. Rebirth of Cities |
| 8. More Minnows, more Giants | 21. Rise of English |
| 9. More Competition | 22. Communities of Culture |
| 10. Increased Value of Niches | 23. A New Trust |
| 11. Communities of Practices | 24. People as Scarce Resource |
| 12. Loose-Knit Corporation Culture | 25. Global Peace |
| 13. Openness | |



One World Language?



The Internationalization of the Web

Initial prevalence of English on the Web

1997 -- Nunberg & Schuetze survey of 2.3 million pages from Web crawl: 85 percent of content is in English, including about 35 percent of content in non-English speaking domains.

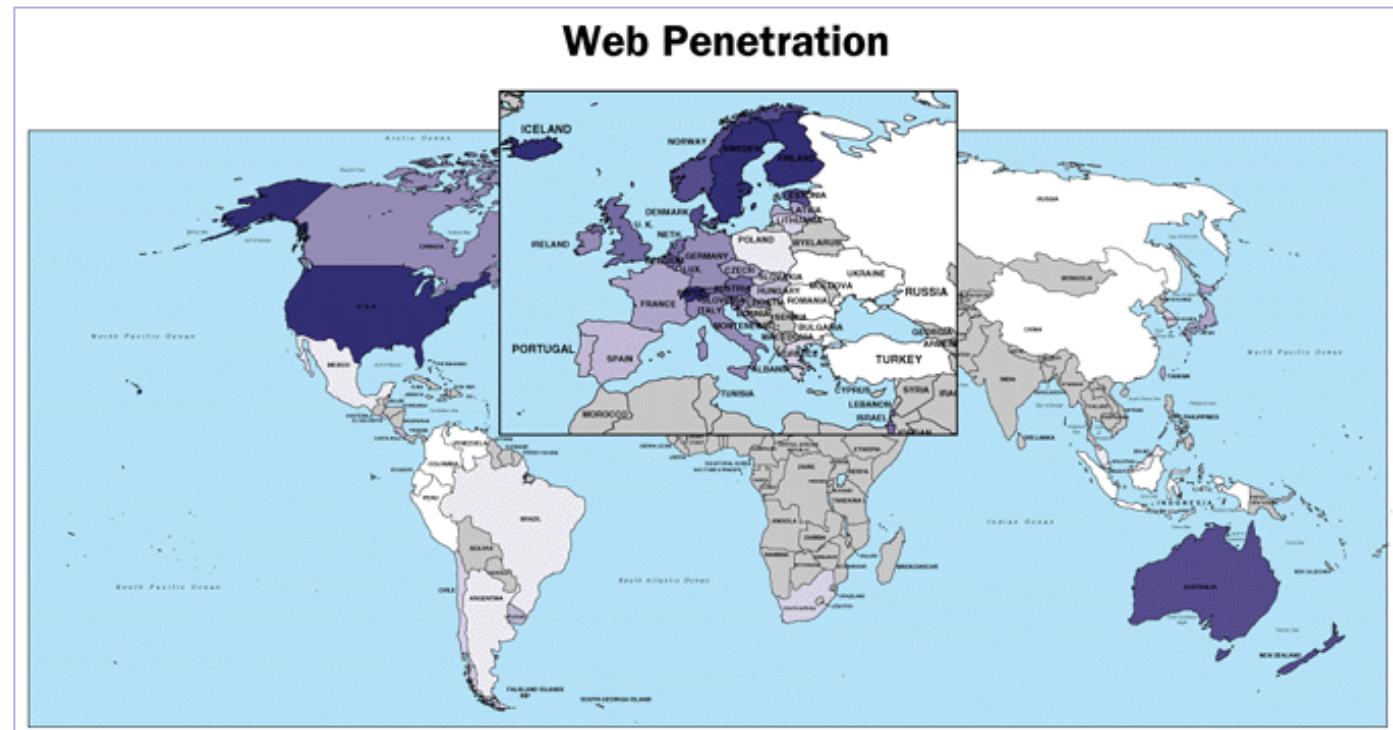
Eng. Most common in N. Europe, less-developed nations

2000: Jack Xu Excite@Home; survey of around 600 million pages: 72% are in English



The Internationalization of the Web

Relative size of Eng-speaking population in developed world
Cf. Web penetration, 1997





Fears of English Hegemony...

“The Web is the ultimate act of intellectual colonialism.” Director of Russian ISP, 1999

“Nearly 70 per cent of the world's Web sites are in English, at times crowding out voices and views.” Kofi Annan, 12-Jan-04



And Anglophone Triumphalism...

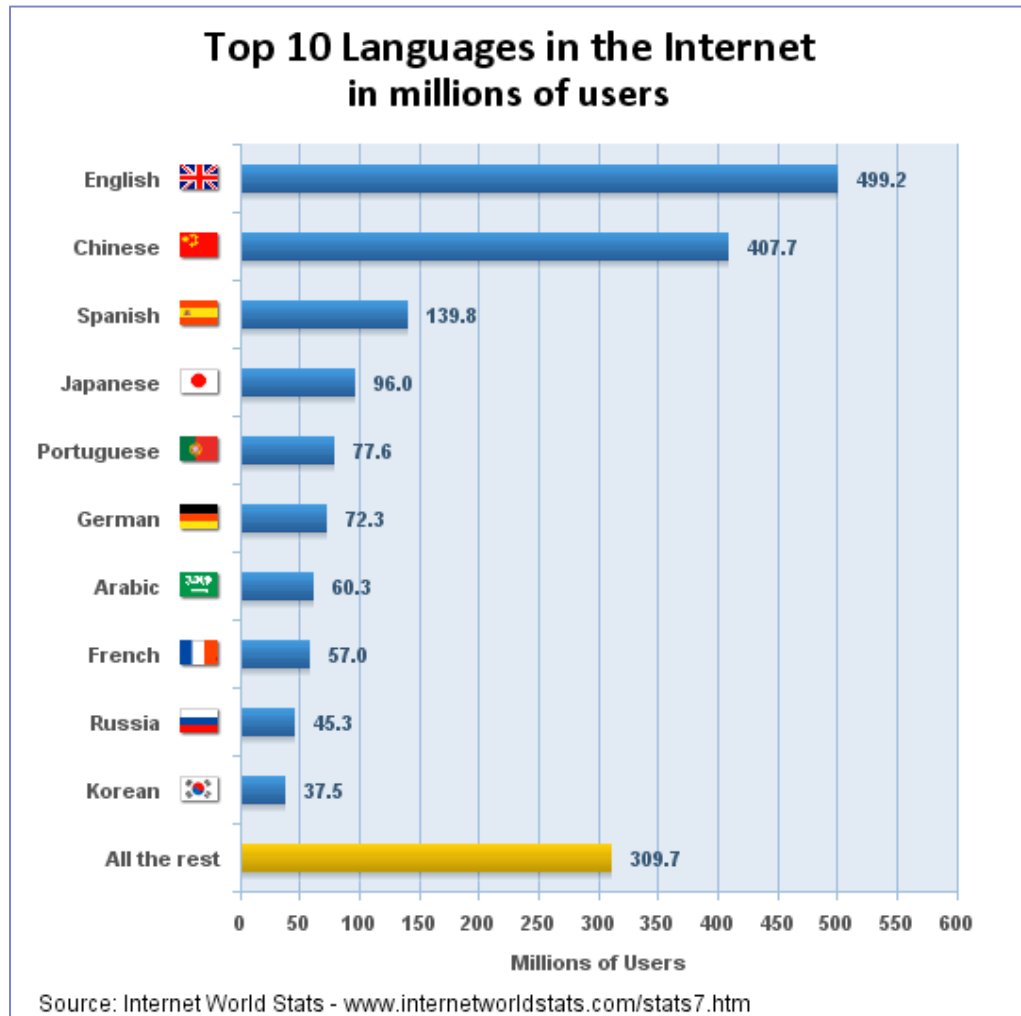
The Internet is "a great force for the Anglification of the planet."

"[Thanks to the Internet,] English will be the native language of a majority of the world by some time in the next century." Editor, *The Futurist*

"There is no retreat from English as the world language; no retreat from and English-speaking world." Sridath Ramphal, chairman of Commission on Global Governance, 1996



Growth of Other Languages on the Web





Internet Penetration Moves toward Equalization...

Penetration increases most sharply in Africa, Middle East, Latin America...

WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS

World Regions	Population (2009 Est.)	Internet Users Dec. 31, 2000	Internet Users Latest Data	Penetration (% Population)	Growth 2000-2009	Users % of Table
Africa	991,002,342	4,514,400	86,217,900	8.7 %	1,809.8 %	4.8 %
Asia	3,808,070,503	114,304,000	764,435,900	20.1 %	568.8 %	42.4 %
Europe	803,850,858	105,096,093	425,773,571	53.0 %	305.1 %	23.6 %
Middle East	202,687,005	3,284,800	58,309,546	28.8 %	1,675.1 %	3.2 %
North America	340,831,831	108,096,800	259,561,000	76.2 %	140.1 %	14.4 %
Latin America/Caribbean	586,662,468	18,068,919	186,922,050	31.9 %	934.5 %	10.4 %
Oceania / Australia	34,700,201	7,620,480	21,110,490	60.8 %	177.0 %	1.2 %
WORLD TOTAL	6,767,805,208	360,985,492	1,802,330,457	26.6 %	399.3 %	100.0 %

NOTES: (1) Population figures are based on the 2009 United Nations World Population Prospects. (2) Internet Users are based on the 2000 and 2009 data from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).



Space for Smaller

Web encourages the spread of English....
And maintenance and spread of smaller
national, regional, and ethnic languages

Музеј 25. мај
Ботићева 6

Glavna nagrada
VW Golf VI !

ПОЛИТИКА ONLINE За четвртак 07. мај 2009.

ПОЧЕТНА О НАМА ИМПРЕСУМ ОГЛАШАВАЊЕ АРХИВА CIR LAT

ВЕСТИ БАН КИ-МУН ИМЕНОВАО НОВОГ ШЕФА БЕЗБЕДНОСТИ

У петак се очекује
решение око
штрајка

Пут у ЕУ нема везе
са Косметом

Од недеље радни
на Коридору 10

ЕКОНОМИЈА
Јужни ток кроз Србију – 400 километара

Чешка, Пољска, Аустрија, Словачка, Мађарска, Румунија, Украјина, Словенија, Хрватска, БиХ, Србија, Црна Гора, Македонија, Бугарска, Италија

ПОГЛЕДИ
Владимир Тодоровић
ЕКОНОМИЈА
ХРОНИКА
СПОРТ
КУЛТУРА

ШТА

פֿאַרווערטס
1897 ייִדישע וואָרטער
דער הערצאקע

May 1st, 2009

HELP אָנאַמענט דאָיאַ הענג אונדז הויפט זייטס

2009 מײַ פֿאַרווערטס

Radio
Radio Archive
Subscription
About us

**ידעשע שטעטלעך
פֿון אוקראַינע**

**Shtetlekh
of Ukraine**

**קלאנג
ביכער**

**ניו קיזימער
New Kiezmer**

ל: וואָס וועט זײַן די ברירה?

אָנגענומען וואָך יוד געפֿירט, צוזאַמען מיט די ישראל-
אָרבינדט אים מיט דעם שטילן שטיקל ערד אפֿשר
אליין, ווי דער גורל פֿון געהערן צו איין פֿאַלק מיט
געשיכטע. די רעגירונג פֿון ישראל, נישט וויכטיק
שער פֿאַזיציע, איז קיין מאל נישט געבליבן
גורל פֿון די יידן אין די תּפֿוצות — צי זאל עס זײַן
געוועזענעם ראַטן-פֿאַרבאַנד, אָדער אין אַנדערע

**לט פֿון דער פֿאַטאַגראַפֿע דזשאָון ראָט
ומאַן (נייראַק)**

עס קומט אויף ייִדישע אונטערנעמונגען אין ניו-
זעט די פֿאַטאַגראַפֿע דזשאָון ראָט ביי דער
ט. אָדער מיט איר ווידעאָ-אפֿאַראַט, אָדער מיט איר
לאַפֿאַראַט, אָדער מיט בידע, כאַפֿט זי אָפֿ די

EL PUNT.CAT
DIVERS INDEPENDENT, CATALA, COMARCAL I DEMOCRÀTIC

May 1st, 2009

BARCELONA AGENDA SERVEIS CANALS REGISTRE BLOGS PRESENCIA

Portada Territori Societat Punt divers Política Economia Cultura Comunicació Punt de vista Esports

Elections europees TOTA LA INFORMACIÓ SOBRE LES ELECCIONS 7 de juny 2009

BARCELONA

PAISOS CATALANS

EURO

L'estudi sobre el Roine desaconsella el transvasament perquè és car i problemàtic

«Agur», ib

La Moreneta és blanca

Сделать стартовой | Предыдущая версия сайта

Жахон
Информационное агентство при МИД РУ

Новые

Главная новость 25 апреля 2010, 06:41

21.04.2010 12:48 | [Политика](#)
**Новые возможности
сотрудничества**
Президент Республики Узбекистан Ислам Каримов по приглашению Президента Российской Федерации Дмитрия Медведева 19-20 апреля посетил Россию с официальным визитом.

24.04.2010 13:15 | [Культура](#)
О Навои как об общем достоянии
«Круглый стол» «Алишер Навои – классик восточной литературы» прошел в Институте археологии и этнографии Академии наук Туркменистана.

24.04.2010 13:09 | [Культура](#)
Не нуждается в переводе



Social Life in a Virtual World

16. Formation of New Communities

17. Decline of National Authority

18. Loss of Religion

22. Communities of Culture



Social Life in a Virtual World

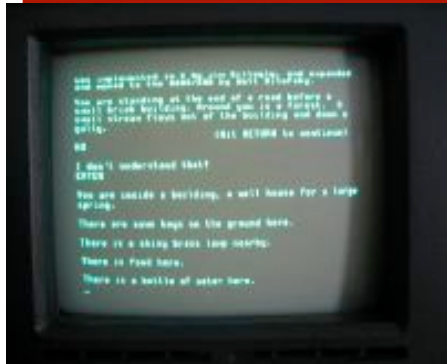


Predictions that Internet/Web will decentralize authority & permit ground-up social & political organization and the development of "virtual communities"

Cf the "virtual corporation," "smart mobs," moveon.org, etc., which are said to facilitate direct democracy



The Rise of “Virtual Communities,” I

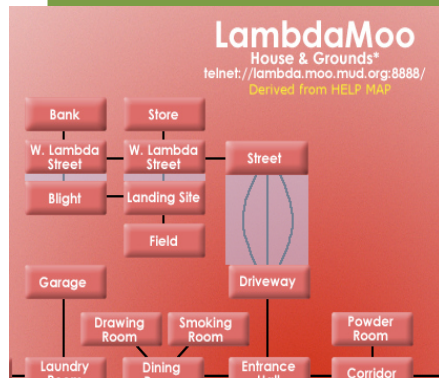


1978-79: Early MUDS (Multi-User Dungeons) enable players of text-adventure games to interact & team up.

1979 > Early BBS's (Bulletin Board services) allow users to connect via modem to a common server & post messages.

1980: USENET is conceived as “poor man’s ARPANET” to allow users to exchange email & software.

1990: First MOOs [“MUD Object Oriented”] created at Xerox Palo Alto Research center. Permits participants to create objects, rooms, etc.





The Rise of “Virtual Communities,” II



1985: Stewart Brand & Larry Brilliant found the BBS The Well (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link), which becomes an influential “virtual community” providing email, forums, etc.

WELL participants go on to found Craigslist, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Salon.com, etc.

1986: Matchmaker dating service begun as text-based BBS, adding to groups like soc.singles, etc. By 2003, US Web-based online dating services draw 40m annual visitors.

1995 Craig Newmark founds Craigslist in San Francisco for posting of local events; by 2000, expanded to 9 cities.



The Beginnings of Social Networking Sites

1997: Slashdot created to provide user-generated "News for nerds." Becomes wildly popular antecedent of blogs.

1997 Sixdegrees.com founded, social networking site that achieved 1m members and anticipated Friendster, MySpace, LinkedIn & Facebook etc.



The Rise of “Virtual Communities,” III



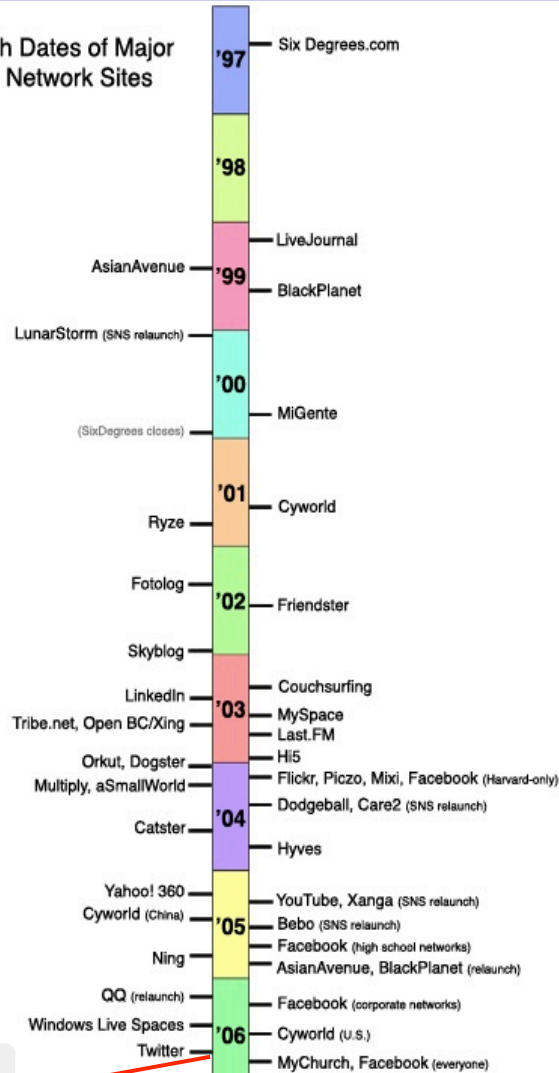
1998 Moveon.org founded to militate for moving past Clinton impeachment hearings. In 2003, becomes important channel for opposition to Iraq war, major source of funding for antiwar candidates.

2002 Meetup.com founded to facilitate offline meeting and networking of interest groups. During buildup to campaign, it becomes an important source of grassroots political organization for Howard Dean campaign, later for Kerry & Edwards.



The Triumph of Social Networks

Launch Dates of Major Social Network Sites



2003: myspace founded, rapidly becomes largest soc. networking site. Complaints about stalking, exploitation, spam, etc. lead some schools to block site.

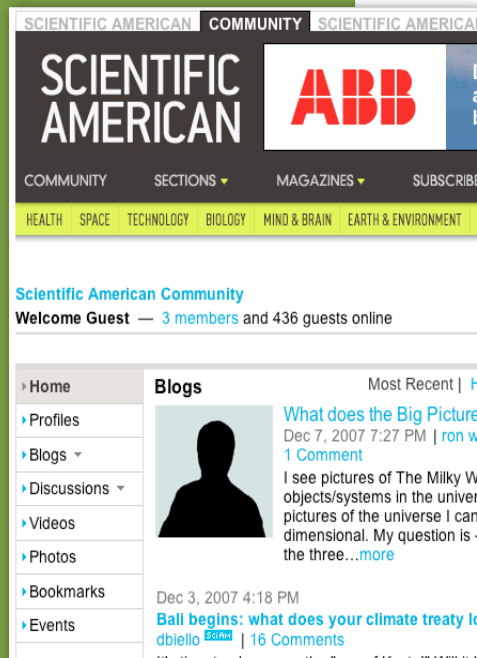
2003: Second Life launched by Linden Labs.

2004: Facebook launched by Harvard undergrad Mark Zuckerberg, extended to other colleges, high schools, & general public. By 2009, claims 200m members worldwide.

2008: Helped by Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes, Obama campaign's use of new media ("MyBo") enables it to raise \$200m by end of primary season and recruit numerous volunteers.



The complications of "community"



"Community" usually implies rich interaction around common interests

Online interaction creates or strengthens groups organized around significant common interests; e.g., sexual orientation, political activism, diseases...

But "community" is also used for almost any kind of group formed online... so long as it's judged positive





Varieties of Online Community

Relation of online media to social groups

Supports Amplifies /extends Transforms Creates





Varieties of Online Community

high-school alums
Book History list
MeetUp
leukemia dl

Relation of online media to social groups

Supports Amplifies /extends Transforms Creates





Varieties of Online Community

But what about Facebook?

Relation of online media to social groups

Supports Amplifies /extends Transforms Creates





Reinforcing Social Divisions



Stratifying Social Space?

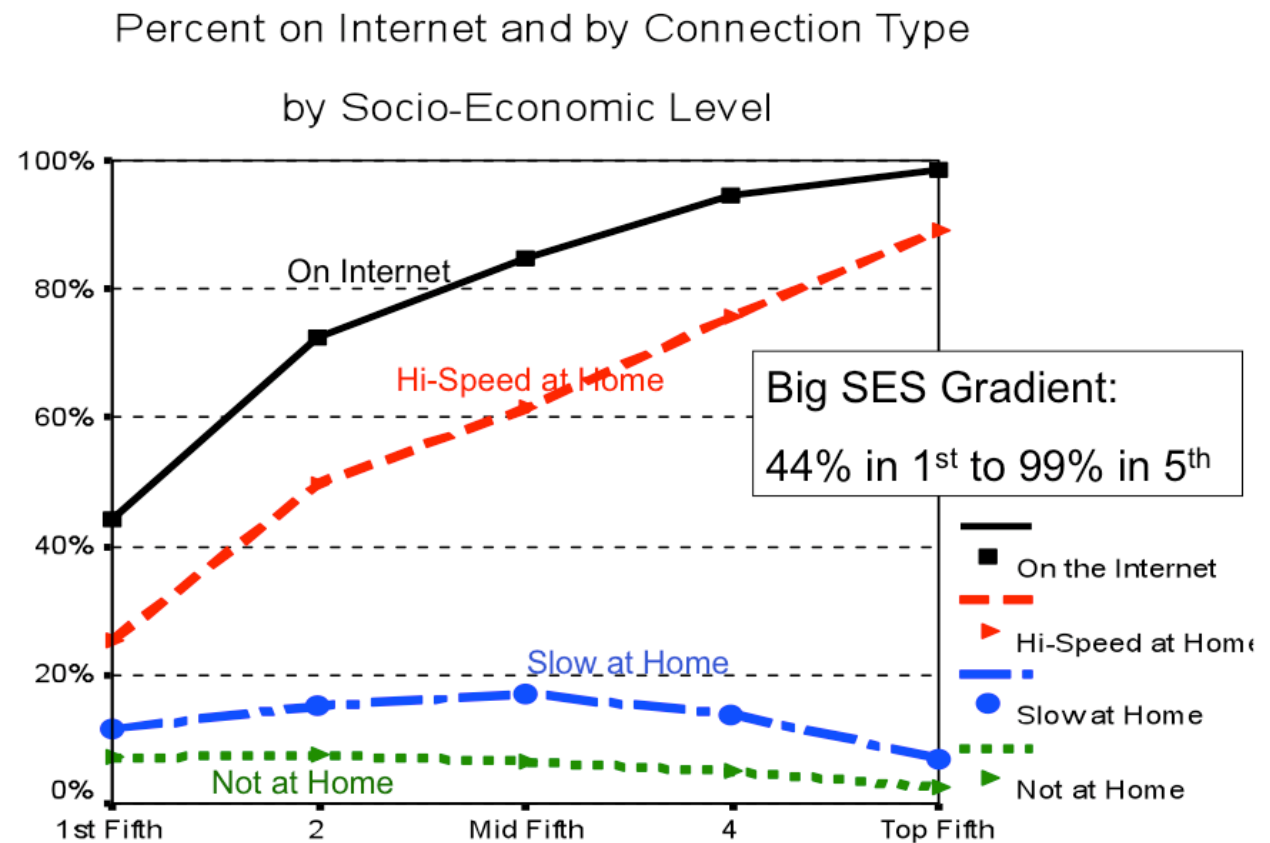
“During the school year 2006-2007, a division emerged between MySpace and Facebook. At the beginning of the year, a common question in American schools was: “Are you on MySpace?” By the end of the year, the question had shifted to “MySpace or Facebook?” As Facebook started gaining momentum, some teenagers switched from MySpace to Facebook. Others joined Facebook without having ever been on MySpace. Still others chose to adopt both. During this period, MySpace did not lose traction. Teens continued to flock to the site, opting for MySpace in lieu of or in addition to Facebook.

Slowly, a distinction emerged. Those who adopted MySpace were from different backgrounds and had different norms and values than those who adopted Facebook.”

danah boyd, Berkman Center



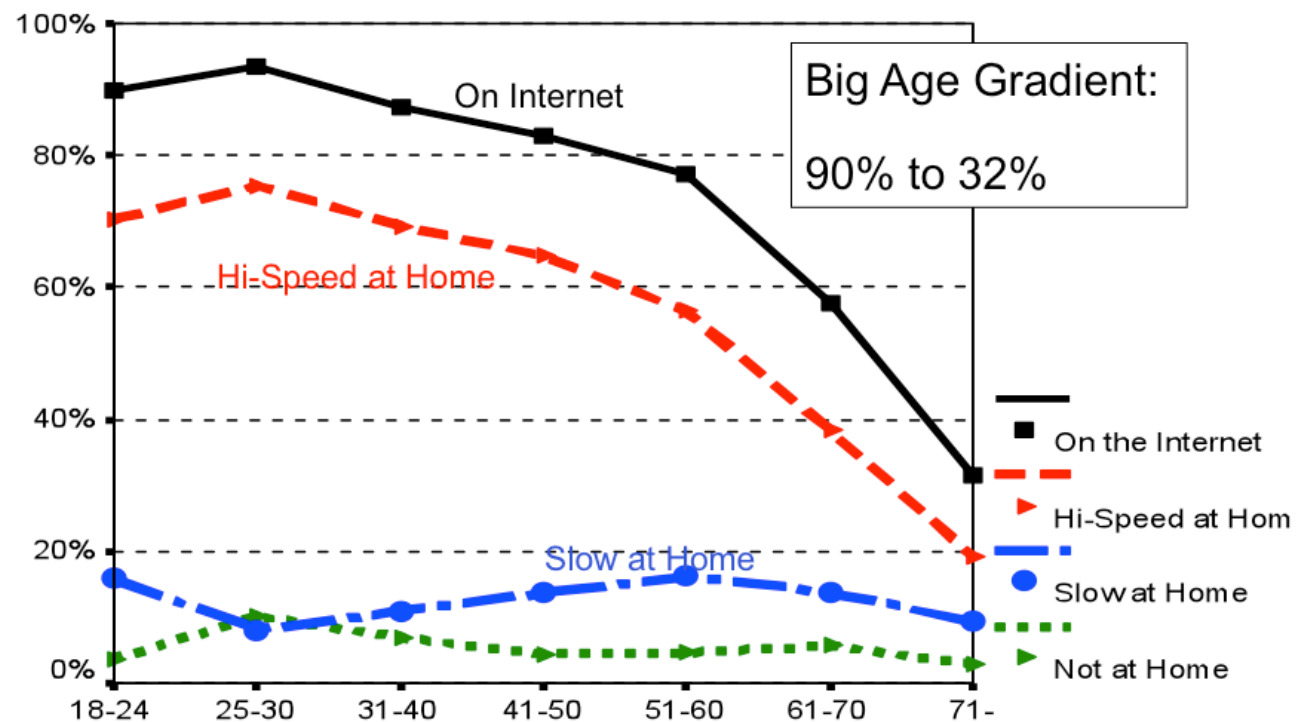
Reinforcing Social Divisions





Reinforcing Social Divisions

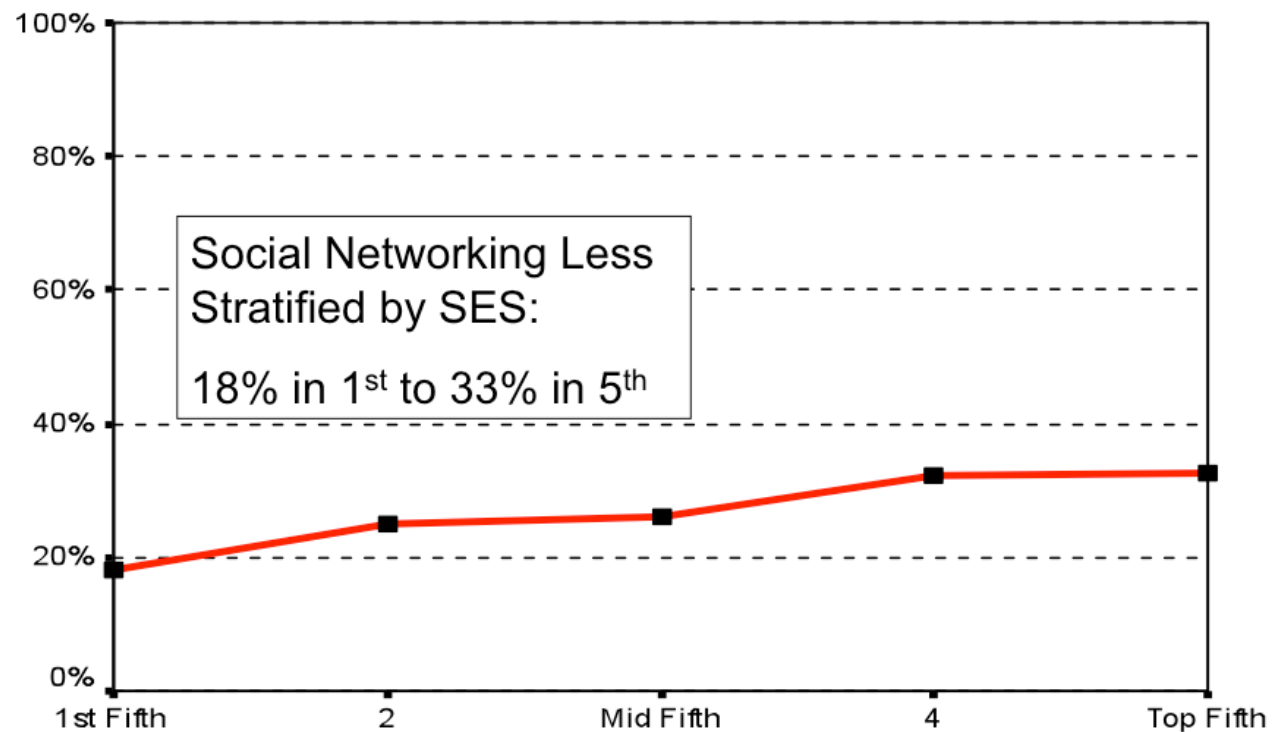
Percent on Internet and by Connection Type
by Age Categories





Reinforcing (some) Social Divisions

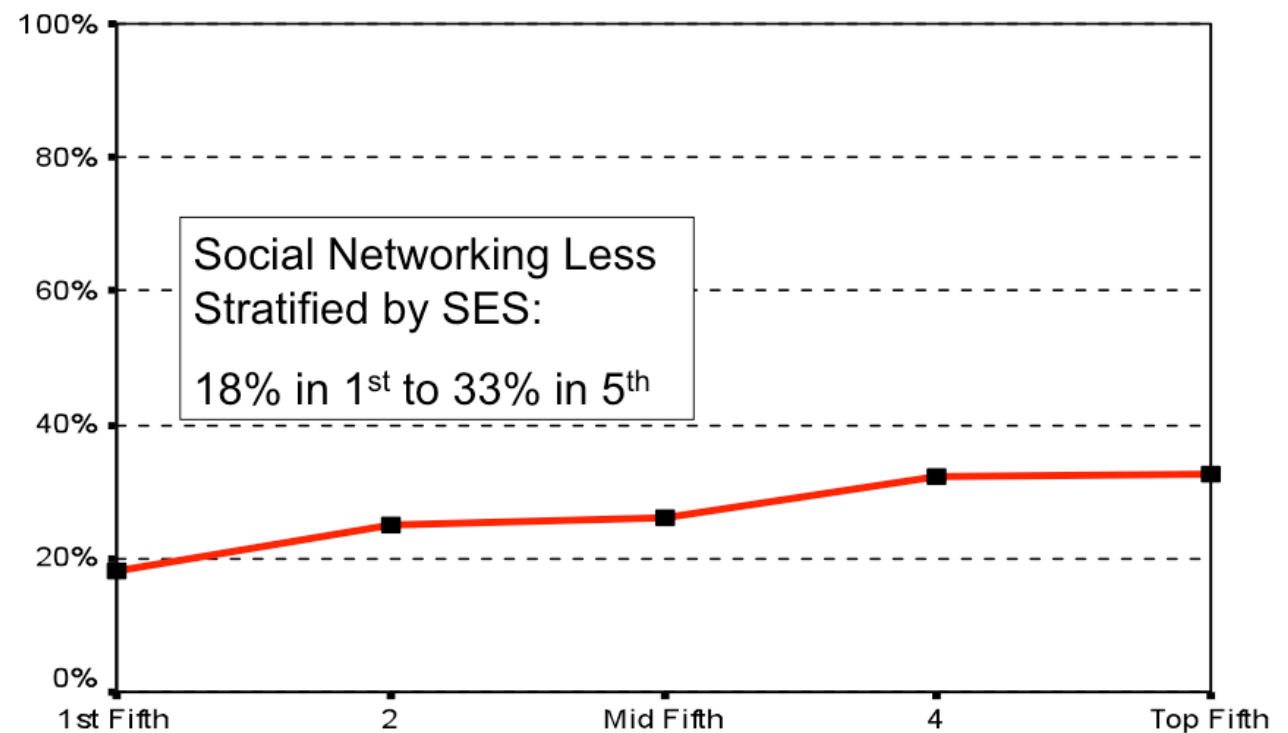
Percent Using Social Networking Sites
by Socio-Economic Level





Social Divisions are Less Evident in Social Networking

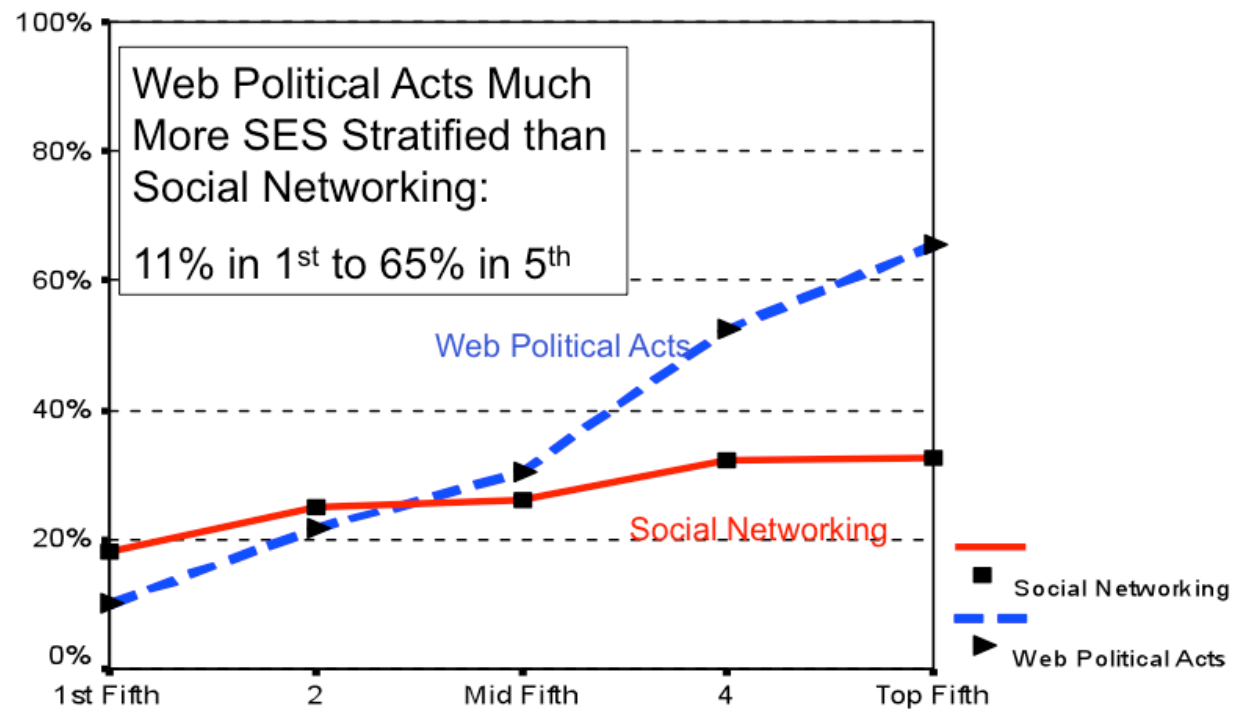
Percent Using Social Networking Sites
by Socio-Economic Level

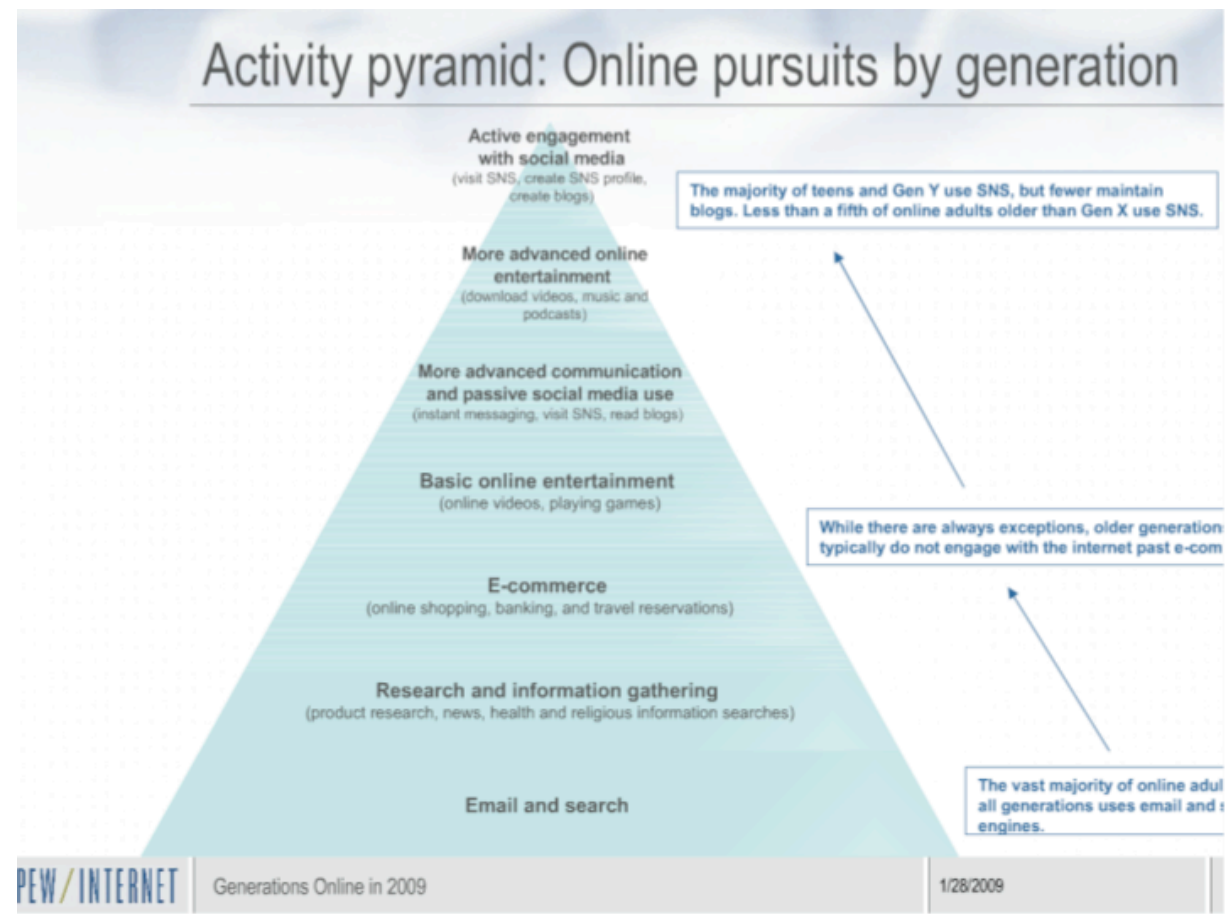




But Sharp Social Divisions in Political Participation

Percent Web Political Acts and Social Networking
by Socio-Economic Level







Does the Internet Unify Community?



The Internet as a Public Space



"The new electronic independence recreates the world in the image of a global village." Marshall McLuhan

Don't think of the Internet as a broadcast medium...think of it as a conversational space. Conversation is the opposite of marketing. It's talking in our own voices about things we want to hear about." David Weinberger, Marketing consultant and Internet adviser to the Dean campaign

"The power of elites to determine what [is] news via a tightly controlled dissemination system [has been] shattered. The ability and authority to distribute text are now truly democratized" Hugh Hewitt





Is the Internet a Community?

Cf. James F. Moore (Berkman Center), on "the global consciousness of the second superpower":

The Internet and other interactive media continue to penetrate more and more deeply all world society...The collective power of texting, blogging, instant messaging, and email across millions of actors cannot be overestimated. Like a mind constituted of millions of inter-networked neurons, the social movement is capable of astonishingly rapid and sometimes subtle community consciousness and action... the emergent democracy of the second superpower is alive with touching and being touched by each other, as the community works to create wisdom and to take action....

visualization of the
blogosphere



Is the Internet a Community?

Social implications of 'cyberspace', 'the infosphere' etc.

A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace

Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you of the past to leave us alone.....You have no sovereignty where we gather.

...I declare the global social space we are building to be naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us. ...

...You have not engaged in our great and gathering conversation, nor did you create the wealth of our marketplaces. You do not know our culture, our ethics, or the unwritten codes that already provide our society more order than could be obtained by any of your impositions.

John Perry Barlow, Electronic Frontier Foundation, 1996



Polarization and the "Siloing" of Political Discourse



Online discourse facilitates "siloing" of political discourse...

But siloing has independent offline roots





Polarization and the "Siloing" of Political Discourse

Reds talk to reds, blues talk to blues

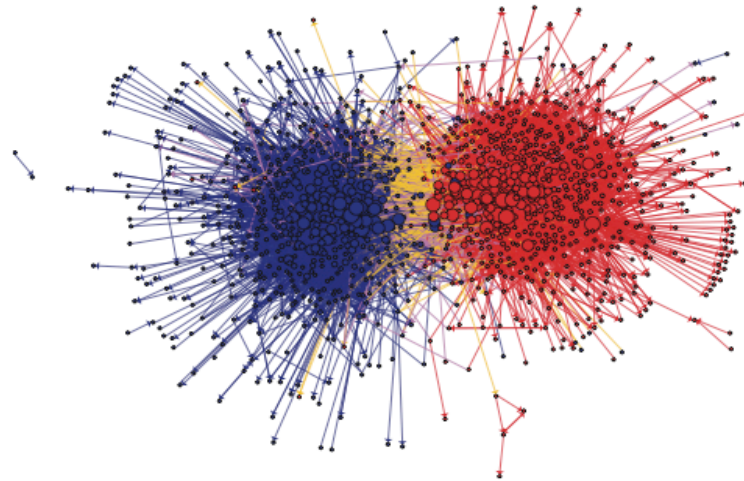
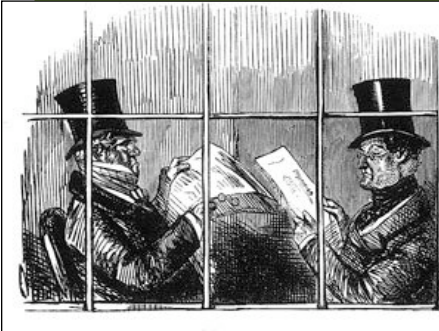


Figure 1: Community structure of political blogs (expanded set), shown using utilizing a GEM layout [11] in the GUESS[3] visualization and analysis tool. The colors reflect political orientation, red for conservative, and blue for liberal. Orange links go from liberal to conservative, and purple ones from conservative to liberal. The size of each blog reflects the number of other blogs that link to it.

Lada Adamic & Nathalie Glance, 2005, "Divided They Blog"

Polarization also evident in topic choice, etc.



Ruptured Discourses

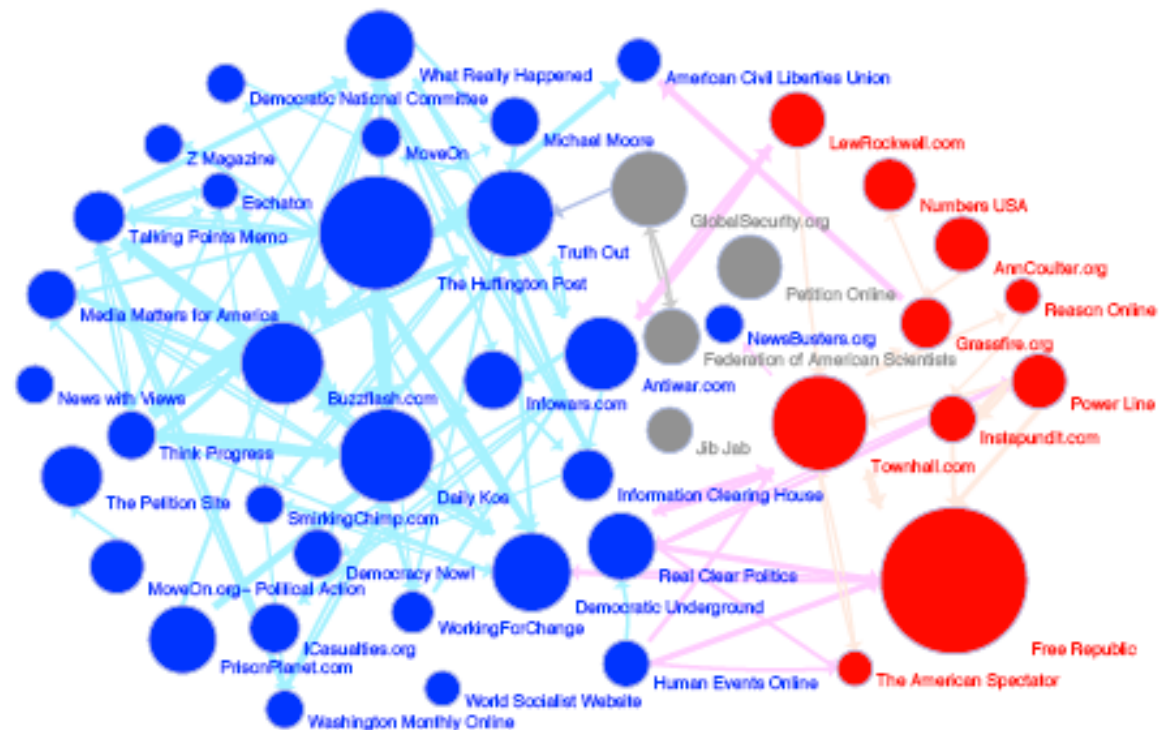


Figure 4.4: This figure maps traffic among the top 50 political Websites, as of May 2006. Liberal- or Democratic leaning sites are in blue; conservative- or Republican-leaning sites are in red. Self-declared neutral or nonpartisan sites are in gray.



Polarization by gender?

Rank	Blog	Male readership (%)
1.	<i>DailyKos.com</i>	47%
2.	Instapundit	59 %
3.	<i>Eschaton (Atrios)</i>	52%
4.	Michelle Malkin	57 %
5.	<i>Crooks and liars</i>	32%
6.	Little Green Footballs	89%
7.	Powerline	74%
8.	RedState.org	68%
9.	<i>Wonkette</i>	46%
10.	Andrew Sullivan	53%
11.	<i>Kevin Drum</i>	55%
12.	Hugh Hewitt	80%



Lower-Casing the internet?



"Effective with this sentence, Wired News will no longer capitalize the "I" in internet. At the same time, Web becomes web and Net becomes net. Why? The simple answer is because there is no earthly reason to capitalize any of these words. Actually, there never was... a change in our house style was necessary to put into perspective what the internet is: another medium for delivering and receiving information. That it transformed human communication is beyond dispute. But no more so than moveable type did in its day. Or the radio. Or television." *Wired*, 8/16/04



Social Effects of the Internet

The Internet potentially amplifies and enhances all forms of social organization

... But doesn't eliminate basic conflicts and oppositions...