

Concepts of Information 9: The Modern Synthesis

Futurology & the death of distance

IBM: Solutions for a small planet <http://www.retrojunk.com/details_commercial/8980/>

"Ye Gods, annihilate but space and time, / And make two lovers happy."

1728 "Martinus Scriblerus" [Jonathan Swift, John Arbuthnot, Alexander Pope, Robert Harley]

"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

"this senior Director of the Mediterranean Steamboats--this new floating and smoking gold mine, which, by an humble outlay of 100,000*l.*, was to set at defiance waves and tides and tempests, and to **annihilate space and time**" *Times*, 1825

"the marvellous instrument which enables the purveyors of **public intelligence to conquer and annihilate space and time, and to convey the information** which has just reached the confines of Europe, at Trieste or Marseilles, to the breakfast table of every citizen of London, Paris, and Berlin ... these days assertion flies along the telegraphic wire, while proof still travels in the post bag." -- *Times*, March 21, 1852

"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* 1857

"A line of telegraph ... from London to Kurrachee, and from thence to every part of India, ... intelligence and commands be daily and hourly communicated with the speed of lightening ... in **this virtual annihilation of time and space in the communications** between England and her distant possessions will be more than realised"
--*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1857

"Capital by its nature drives beyond every spatial barrier. Thus with the creation of the physical conditions of exchange - of the means of communication and transport - the annihilation of space by time - becomes an extraordinary necessity for it." -- Marx, *Grundrisse*, 1857-61

"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

"Thanks to steam and electricity, which are **annihilating distances**, a noble and enlightened competition has been established ... Verily, a trade-mark has become a thing of moment, for it spurns the thralldom of territorial limits." William Browne, *Treatise on the Law of Trade-Marks*, 1873.

"It was not **the annihilation of space and time** which was the most wonderful result of the telegraph, but it was the profound change which it had produced in our systems of government and of commerce." --*Times*, 1887 [Telegraph Jubilee]

"the **almost complete annihilation of time and space** between the distant antipodal points of the American continent ... produced by the construction of the Pacific Railroad"
--John Wesley Clappitt, *Echoes from the Rocky Mountains*, 1888

" This age of ours ... when the pulsations of electricity vibrate and throb around this earth, uniting nations as one family" --Wise, Morris S. *Trade-marks and trade-mark law*, 1889

"Nul n'a plus le temps de lire un ouvrage de longue haleine ... Or, la forme du Dictionnaire est la seule qui donne **l'instantanéité de l'information**" --Maillard de Marafy, *Grande Dictionnaire ... de la Propriété Industrielle ...* , 1890-1896.

"Long conversations over the telephone ... should be discountenanced. ... A Mechanical contrivance of unequalled power in **the spread of intelligence and the annihilation of distance** has been too frequently transformed, through mere heedlessness, into an instrument of torture" --*NYTimes*, 1914

"Edmund Burke ... in moving his resolutions for conciliation with the American Colonies .. fully appreciated the effects on the relations between Great Britain and America which would result from rapid means of communication, but abandoned as hopeless an idea which has now been realized--**the annihilation of space and time ...**" --*Times*, 1919

"Distance is doomed This aviating generation will probably not be able to annihilate space, but it is certainly destroying distance" --*NYT* May 16, 1928

"In this country, Mr McDonald [sec of state for the Dominions] said, we (like you, no doubt, in Canada) have come to regard **the annihilation of space and time as no longer something to be wondered at.**" -- *Times*, 1937

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. "
--McLuhan & Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*, 1967

“the eclipse of distance and the foreshortening of time, almost to the fusion of the two.”
--Daniel Bell, *Coming of Post Industrial Society*, 1976

"anyone can transmit any amount of information, any experience, any opportunity to anyone or everyone, anywhere, at any time, instantaneously, without barriers of convenience or cost, the resulting transformation becomes a transfiguration. The powers it offers us bring us back to the paradigms of paradise." -- George Gilder, *Telecosm* 2002

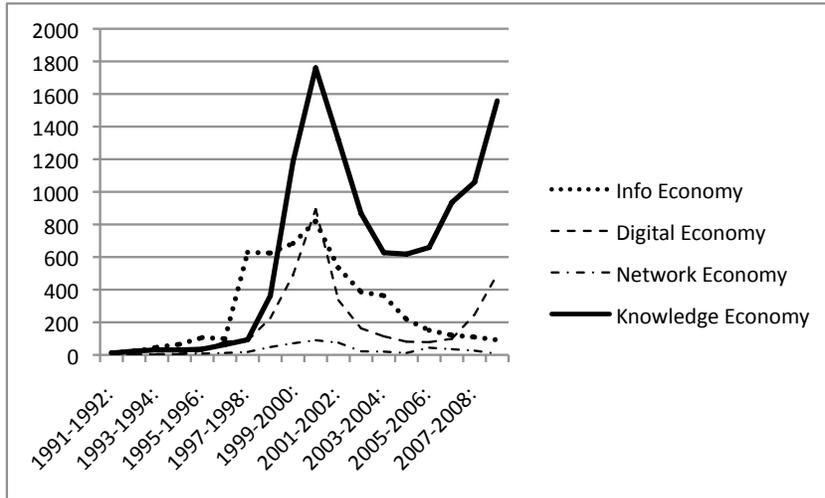
localization

"Many various causes have led to the localization of industries; but the chief causes have been physical conditions; such as the character of the climate and the soil, the existence of mines and quarries in the neighbourhood, or within easy access by land or water. Thus metallic industries have generally been either near mines or in places where fuel was cheap. The iron industries in England first sought those districts in which charcoal was plentiful, and afterwards they went to the neighbourhood of collieries. ...

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.

...Every cheapening of the means of communication, every new facility for the free interchange of ideas between distant places alters the action of the forces which tend to localize industries.

the knowledge economy



Kline -- information & two theories of management:

Management Science Taylor - Cybernetics/S&W (v. Dorsey, 1957, ASQ) - - ERP

"We must organize in Russia the study and the teaching of the Taylor System" --Lenin

or

Human resources - a role for middle management

From MS through HR to March and Simon, *Organizations*, 1958

-members are passive instruments [management science--Taylor ... Weiner?]

-members have goals and motivation [human resources]

-members as 'choosing, decision-making, problem-solving organisms that can do only one or a few things at a time.'

tensions of organization theory

organizational learning:

innovation vs routine

exploration vs exploitation [March, 1985]

learning vs cooption

community, organization, network - technology [Turner]

Information vs Knowledge

knowledge management -- and its discontents

Organizational theory - James Scott & political theory