



Social Motivations in a Cyber World

— BY CLAIR STROM and MONICA AMARELO

The Internet era, like the Renaissance and Enlightenment before it, is one of the greatest revolutions to advance the potential of human achievement and human connection. Technology changes our expectations of each other and social media channels like Facebook, Google, and Twitter have transformed modern life.

One of the world's most original thinkers on technology trends, Ben Hammersley¹ has worked as a war correspondent and technological innovator. He coined the term “podcasting” and is the British ambassador to East London Tech

City, the British Silicon Valley. Hammersley is paid to tell stories about the future in order to understand the present.

In the words of the science fiction author William Gibson, “the future is already here, just not evenly distributed.”²

According to Hammersley, Facebook, Twitter, and Google now define modern life in the West. A functioning Internet with freedom of speech, and a good connection to social networks is not only a sign of modernity, but of civilization itself. The Internet is the central platform for business, culture, and personal relationships — “where

we live, where we bank, where we meet, where we fall in love.” The Internet is the dominant platform for life in the 21st century.

In 1963, Intel co-founder Gordon Moore made a bold prediction, popularly known as Moore's Law.³ Moore's Law states that the number of transistors on a chip will double approximately every two years. This golden rule is a guiding principle and a springboard for technological advancement. For the same price the number of components on an integrated circuit will double. Or conversely, the same amount of computing

MOORE'S LAW

Moore's Law is the foundation for exciting new technological capabilities and improved energy efficiency. While Moore's Law is the fundamental driver of the semiconductor industry, what's even more important is what it delivers to the consumer. Advances in process technology and reductions in cost make computing devices accessible to an ever-increasing number of people worldwide, empowering innovations—from the smallest handheld devices to the largest cloud-based servers.

Understanding Moore's Law is the key to understanding the modern world. The evidence of Moore's Law is everywhere, embedded in devices millions of people use every day, such as personal computers and laptops, tablets, smart phones, cell phones, common household appliances, and consumer electronics—as well as inspiring, important technological innovations in automobiles, life-saving medical devices, and spacecrafts.

Moore's Law has many implications and it makes planning a real challenge. For example, when Apple released the iPhone 3Gs in June 2009,⁴ it was a magical device. Three years later this amazing technology is

obsolete. The new iPhone 5 will be 128 or 256 times as powerful as the iPhone 3Gs. The possibility for that increase in power is the driving force behind the modern condition.

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technology won't exist anymore. These laws will be in force for the next 10 – 20 years, enacting its rules on technology, which can't possibly yet be imagined. Policies, therefore, need to be written with the future in mind, not the present.⁵

Courts around the world also are creating Internet law right now—a process that is both exciting and frightening to watch. Unlike other areas of commerce that can turn to historical traditions to help settle disputes and guide the development

CYBER AND INTERNET LAWS

For politicians it makes life very difficult. In terms of cyber security policy, officials are writing legislation for outdated technology. Today policymakers attempt to make laws to govern technology which won't come into force for another few years—by which time the

of the law, the law of the Internet has no history to fall back on. Cyber law is being developed by judges who work to fit legal disputes on the Internet into preexisting frameworks. As a result, the legal principles governing conduct and commerce in cyberspace are in a state of flux. Claims of trademark and copyright infringement have become commonplace items on the world wide web.

For example, the 1996 Telecommunications Act,⁶ was relevant when passed but now is severely outdated since it only pertains to wired services and does not address wireless networks.

Two more recent examples are the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA)⁷ “to promote prosperity, creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation by combating the theft of U.S. property, and for other purposes”⁸ and the Protect IP Act (PIPA),⁹ which started off in the U.S. Senate as the failed Combating Online Infringement and Counterfeits Act (COICA) from 2010.

Congress shelved both antipiracy bills¹⁰ indefinitely after Internet giants Google, Facebook, and Wikipedia rallied the world wide web to deal a major defeat to the traditional media industry while emboldening a new breed of online political activists. Congressional aides and lobbyists said lawmakers were reluctant to brave another firestorm incited by Google, Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia and other popular websites during an election year.

CHANGING NORMS

The halving again and again of the price of technologies also is a problem for national



As every aspect of our lives moves onto the Internet,¹¹ the need for robust security measures is great, but those security measures come with their own risks. What are we protecting, if the protection itself means we become, in some small way, a police state?

Under current defense philosophies, technological innovation inevitably leads to a constant state of asymmetric warfare. A new philosophy is required to reflect the present conditions and the future societal norms.

Telephone numbers are one example of a new norm. Before the turn of the century, a phone number represented a place—a house, an office, a booth – and the understanding that someone might not be at that place when a call was placed. Today, a phone number is a person. The switch in the meaning of phone numbers, from place to person, has completely changed social behavior.

In about ten short years, society has transformed from a specialist class of people with expertise to voice opinions to a reputation society.¹² In the past, verdicts on meals, books, music, television, films, products and politics were only shared

with a few people –neighbors, friends, and family. Today people assume that every meal, every hotel, every piece of culture consumed is something to have an opinion on and to share that viewpoint on the Internet. Today the Internet provides a place to review everything.

Twelve years ago, the only opinion that mattered was of the professional critic's. For example, to review a book, it was necessary to gain years of experience to become an authority. Today people are encouraged to submit reviews regardless of background or expertise.

The change in expectation causes problems, especially in the political arena. People write and post opinions in support of candidates and issues during elections. After a candidate is elected, those previously valued opinions no longer matter and are simply ignored.

In this way, society is renegotiating its social contract. The Internet, and the content on it, empowers people. People have become more sophisticated in their understanding of media and understand the value of data.

This leads to the next big social change. There is a growing expectation of

being able to access all the other data in the world and it actively changes the way people live. Digital natives will soon be in positions of authority, eager to take advantage of proliferating modes of global communication. In an age of proliferating data, smart phones and Internet literacy, we must remain aware that extremist messaging will reach more susceptible and receptive audiences than at any time in the past. ■

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³ *PC Magazine*, Encyclopedia, definition of Moore's Law: http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia_term/0,2542,t=Moore's+law&ci=47229,00.asp

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⁵ The Internet Society provides this guide on Internet law as a public service. The guide provides links to many useful legal research sites on the Internet: <http://www.isoc.org/internet/law/>

⁶ Federal Communications Commission website. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 with text and links to additional resources: <http://transition.fcc.gov/telecom.html>

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¹² Hassan Masum, Mark Tovey with foreword by Craig Newmark. *The Reputation Society - How Online Opinions Are Reshaping the Offline World*, MIT Press, February 2012: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=12750>