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PRODUCTIVITY IN NEW MEDIA

THREE DIFFERENT FUTURE SCENARIOS

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WHAT IF INTERNET RUNS LIKE A BUNNY

THE STORY ABOUT THE BUNNY, INTRODUCTION TO SCENARIO 1.

This bunny is extraordinary. Not only does he run fast, he's also a real »techie« and likes to build applications, surf the internet and find information really quick. He likes that the Internet has gotten so much easier these days, he can find pretty much everything he needs with today's AI-technology and it's always a piece of cake.

The bunny loves technology, so of course he's got the latest iPhone, he uses it all the time, especially when he comes to a new city and needs to find the nearest carrotstore. The iPhone will find everything the bunny wants to find through its great mapsystem, which is a mashup between the Yellow Pages and Google Maps.

When the bunny is on the subway train it beeps in his pocket, he picks up his iPhone and there is a message from »Speedmatch«, a dating-application hooked to facebook, that says »You have a match where you are! click here to find out!«. The bunny then clicks on the link where he finds a facebook profile of a bunnygirl that has the same interests and personality as the bunny. The bunny loves to find all information he needs in one place, and boy do we got a lot of those websites nowadays! Whether he wants to find a bunnygirl to go on a date with or buy a new cellphone or get some ideas on where to buy a new apartment, the bunny will find all information he needs on his online desktop where he has posted all his favorite links.

The bunny loves sneakers, expensive sneakers with carrots on them, so when hanging out at the shopping mall, the bunny gets an instant message on his iPhone from »Shoeworld«. It says »The new limited edition Michael Jordan shoe just arrived at the Shoeworld, 50 feet to your left! Welcome!«. This is fantastic, bunny thinks. He's not sure if he wants to buy the shoes, so he photographs them with his iPhone and uploads it on a certain directory on Flickr that automatically forwards it to several sneaker enthusiast-forums.

Now the bunny just have to wait for feedback on the shoes.

The bunny does it all in one click and he wants to do it right now.

SCENARIO 1: THE PROBABLE ONE.

The three most significant trends we see on the Internet at the moment are mash-ups (i.e Yahoo Pipes), Mobile Presence Technology (i.e iPhone) and Organized Internet (i.e Metaweb, Freebase, AI).

A mash-up is basically different web services connected to each other. The new service is far more superior and new functions arise when they work together than separated. Yahoo Pipes is a way of easily connect different services, for example »NYTimes through YouTube« which finds videos that relate to today's NYTimes RSS newsfeeds.

The iPhone is an example of the mobile device that we most likely will see more of in the future. When you are on the run, you can get the information you need, mainly through applications you find on the Internet, most of them being mash-up applications. For example you can find the nearest Starbucks coffeeshop from where you are standing at the moment, as a result of Google Maps, The Yellow Pages and Starbucks.com connected to each other.

The evolution of the Semantic web makes the internet much easier, simpler and more efficient. The AI Bots and the Metaweb sorts and finds information in a new way and then structures it. When the information is organized, software will essentially become able to understand it in a new way and make it easier to see »the whole picture«, so to speak. These new organization routines creates a standard which web applications can use, thus enhancing the possibility of »mash-uping« and crossreferring.

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WHAT IF INTERNET SLOWS LIKE A TURTLE

THE STORY ABOUT THE TURTLE, INTRODUCTION TO SCENARIO 1.

The turtle is slow. He doesn't exercise much and is quite introvert, pretty much the opposite of the bunny. The turtle enjoys to spend time at home, reading a novel and drinking tea. He doesn't like the city and it's neon lights, hectic atmosphere and speeding cars. The turtle doesn't like new things too much either, except for facebook which he has to keep in touch with old friends and especially to keep in touch with his old high school sweetheart Mrs Turtleneck. Mrs Turtleneck recently got him to buy an Iphone aswell just so that she could reach him anytime of the day and even furthermore to know where he is, in case he got in trouble or accidentally got stuck in his shell. The turtle thinks it's awful that people should know where to find eachother all the time. "what if i want some privacy?", the turtle says.

One day when the turtle is walking to the library, his phone vibrates. The turtle is frustrated because he thinks that the phone is spamming too much. He tries to look at the message at the screen, but his fingers are too big and he accidently hits the mp3-button and the latest sting-song comes on.

When the turtle gets home, he is angry at himself for buying so much stuff he doesn't need, just to get rid of the target marketed pop-ups in his Iphone. This "shopping spree" has made him lose hours of freelance media work that was worth thousands of turtledollars.

When the turtle logs on to Facebook, he sees 10 new messages, 17 friend requests, information on what everyone he knows is doing right now and 15 invitations to applications. In addition to all of this, the window in which he surfs all of a sudden closes and says "the program you are using has shut down". The turtle is now pretty frustrated to say the least.

The turtle has just reached the subway station which is totally packed with people when his Iphone suddenly beeps and vibrates like it's going mad. The turtle looks at the screen and sees

that there are 23 new messages from "Speed-match" on it. He opens up the first one and sees a facebook profile and when he looks up from the phone he sees that a whole bunch of turtle-girls is coming towards him, they're screaming his name, it's too much for him to handle, so he crawls back in to his shell and therefore misses work.

SCENARIO 2: THE OVERFLOW ONE.

If scenario one was a positive, possible outcome of the trends and technology that emerges as we speak, scenario two is a much more clouded and chaos-driven scenario.

As the Mash-Up technology expands and the Iphone becomes the standard everyday device everyone uses.

The first is the chain reaction that occurs when mobile presence, lack of privacy and information overload occurs all at once. Because the user always has his Iphone on him, with his profile and personality viewable for companys. The user gets spammed with information overload due to i.e target marketing.

The problem is the user gets to much tailored information which makes it hard to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant. Once the Iphone/mash-up-wave hit the climax, every company wants to join because they don't wanna miss out.

Maybe the interesting stuff gets converted to the semantic web standard which makes the new, organized web look more pale and controlled (freebase.org), and all the fun bits, the hard to find, anarchic interesting stuff falls into oblivion.

The lack of privacy and online activity is an interesting aspect. Due to the Iphone, Wi-Fi and different mash-up applictions it would be possible to follow and register a person, the persons habits, activities and his day to day life without the person being aware of. These privacy-intrusion-possabilites could be abused and exploited.

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WHAT IF INTERNET THINKS LIKE AN OWL

THE STORY ABOUT THE OWL, INTRODUCTION TO SCENARIO 3

The owl believes in the free will. She says what she thinks and she doesn't conform. She is a thinker and questions society. Some people call her an anarchist. When the owl surfs the Internet, she gets spam that seem to be directed at her specifically, she gets mail that says "join the democrats, now!" and when she surfs online magazines the banners that show up are christian and right wing advertisement except for some McDonalds-banners. The owl is feeling pretty confused these days because it doesn't seem like anything is working like it used to. When she checks her Ical which is linked to Google calender on her computer it says something completely different than before, for instance, when she puts in a meeting in her calender for one of her support groups it all of a sudden changed to "wash the car". The owl doesn't even own a car, she thinks it's bad for the planet to drive one.

These kind of things make the owl think that there is a conspiracy going on. Usually she doesn't believe in those kind of theories, but the chaos in the digital media nowadays can't be something else than a big conspiracy, she thinks.

When the owl is walking towards the bus station she gets a message on her Iphone that says "see you later at the democratic convention!" and then later "i hope you are coming, we really need you here". A couple of hours later she tries to log on to her blog where she writes about political refugees. She's not able to log on and the blog has been censored. The owl takes her computer and throws it out the window. After the computer hits the ground, the owl hears a hard knock on the door..

SCENARIO 3: THE WILD DARK ONE

This is the last and maybe the most interesting part of our vision. If we assume that scenario one or two occurs, scenario three is the dystopian future vision of these two, a bit sci-fi but interesting nevertheless.

Because the new technology introduced in scenario one and two (semantic web, mash-ups, smartphones), people get more stuff done in a more efficient way than ever before thanks to the constant use of these devices and applications. But this works both ways, in return the net gets a constant information-flow of reoccurring human behavior schemes, everything we do is registered somehow. Everything you consume, read, listen, choose, interact, watch and think gets filtered through the Internet in one way or a other. Due to the new "presence-devices", we are now a more active part of the Internet than ever before. The semantic web, due to more developed AI's, could much easier track these daily internet activities to each single specific individual.

This could be abused and exploited by, conspiring governments or corporations. Devices constantly reminding the person to be somewhere, controlling a persons way to commute, places to visit, friends to call, what to consume, what information to take in, what to read, what to watch and so on. The "abuser" could basically choose what to inform and what not to inform and we wouldn't notice because we would still have the "feeling of free choice", when we on the contrary are slaves. Basically we choose to make less decisions, because our devices makes them for us instead, tailored after our personality.