

Material for lecture #2

This lecture consists of references to some web pages that are worthy of note. Also some brief comments are included, though I strongly recommend to look yourself these pages and to form your own opinion.

Stephen L. Talbott

Education by Acronym

http://www.oreilly.com/people/staff/stevet/netfuture/2000/Mar2100_104.html#2b

Excerpt

- True education is, at heart, a matter of seeing with new eyes what one previously "knew".

The motto of this course.

There is no such thing as information

http://www.oreilly.com/people/staff/stevet/netfuture/1999/Feb0999_84.html#3

Excerpt

- If, in communication, you achieve absolute accuracy -- if the "information" you communicate is something you can control and count and transmit reliably, bit by well-defined bit, from one database to another -- then you're no longer talking about communication at all.

We must really carefully consider the question what is relevant and what is irrelevant when we are talking about communication and information.

The Fascination with Ubiquitous Control

http://www.oreilly.com/people/staff/stevet/netfuture/1999/Sep2399_95.html#2d

Excerpt

- A "capability", merely considered as such, will always seem better to have than not to have.

This is one of my favourite quotations – think about it and read the article.

Andrew Odlyzko

Internet pricing and the history of communications

<http://www.research.att.com/~amo/doc/history.communications1.pdf>

Excerpt

- The schemes that aim to provide differentiated service levels and sophisticated pricing schemes are unlikely to be widely adopted.

Odlyzko has during the last years strongly promoted very simple charging models for the Internet, and what is best, based on very sound reasoning. I strongly recommend reading this enjoyable document.

Content is not king

<http://www.research.att.com/~amo/doc/history.communications2.pdf>

Excerpt

- Spending on point-to-point communications has traditionally been much higher than on broadcast media, and all indications are that this will continue.

This is very relevant remark, and anyone that suggests that broadcast type of service will be the killer application of any future telecommunication network shall read this document very carefully.

David S. Isenberg

The myth of five nines

<http://www.isen.com/archives/000623.html>

Excerpts

- No wireless mobile network I've used has a 'nine' to call its own. I have a problem with approximately one call out of every two -- so it rates 'one five', or 50%.
- Furthermore, we need wireless services that aren't priced according to some Bell-headed paradigm designed to keep us from using them.

Isenberg has strong opinions about telecom business. Although some of the opinions are quite provocative, he always provides interesting real-life examples, as the above mentioned Smartletter #41 shows.

Donald A. Norman

The Invisible Computer

<http://www.businessweek.com/chapter/norman.htm>

Excerpt

- Companies shouldn't always talk to their customers: they should talk to those who are not (yet) customers. Among other things, this was Edison's main fault. He thought he knew better than his customers; he didn't provide them with what they wanted, he provided them with what he predetermined was best for them.

This web page includes only the first chapter of the book, but still it contains the essence of the whole volume. Particularly, the Edison phonograph case is interesting and still relevant after a century.