

Foreword

SOCIAL MEDIA IN IDENTITY TRANSFER – WEB PRESENCE IN ORDINARY LIFE

In order to tune to this book's genre and messages, it helps if you consider web presence as a transformational process and catalytic to identity and social awareness. Feel happy to mirror its main ideas and perspectives against your prior ideas on how we changed during earlier media venues like the radios, telephone, TV, fax and early computer applications like the spreadsheet and word processor. It may strike you the similarity in excitement all the time. The coming year you may expect further transformations to take place; Trolling, role taking and disruptive new modalities of learning, playing and working will appear. Fasten your seatbelts please!

The book that you just opened can only be published now as we obviously needed more than two decades to become aware that web presence and survival is not just an extrapolation from the period where radio, telephone and fax were ruling. Whether we take the terms like addiction, disorder, virtuality or vicarious; it means that we are not capable to see web presence as vital for ordinary life yet. We need pathologies to at least frame the new phenomena like persons whose "Life-on-the-Screen" (See Sherry Turkle's publication in the early nineties) we can only accept if it fits to extravagant lifestyles in the era before.

Most indicative is the cautious steps taken by education, care and industry to embrace gaming as serious contribution to prime human efforts like working and learning. But already the scrupulous term "serious gaming" reveals that we are not convinced about its urgency yet; Serious gaming is like "joyful suffering"; we do not accept its real nature. While gaming intends to win, playing intends to lose ourselves. And here is where the next decade needs to provide more adequate terms to describe the triangle playing-working-learning. We give continuous efforts to keep labeling work as sacrificing our time for the sake of our employer. We cannot believe that health-care might be the acceptance of ageing. We are afraid to give control to youngsters, as they tend to dive into fictitious worlds in order to construe unknown understanding so far.

Role-playing has been discovered as enticing before we enter the real social setting. Currently role-playing is less exotic as it is already inherently practiced in social media from the very early beginning of computer sensation. Playing of Massively-Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) can be seen as a way to experiment with one's identity. Trolling goes further and manifests in intentionally causing anger and frustration: online harassment in a hostile manner. No wonder many of us tend to see the extravagance of cyberborgs as potential threat to societal conventions and tolerance. This book makes you aware that this scale of aberrations might be interpreted in different ways. When the first bikes entered on the road, children used to ask adult passengers: "Am I going well?" As then the adult asked: "Where do you want to go to then?" the children claimed: "that's none of your business".

It illustrates that we typically tend to refrain from explicit navigation and tend to land into crisscross explorations of the grass fields with no idea where earlier learners made the lanes. This book pretends to help you in conceiving ideas on society and web trends, without taking away your own intuition on what symptoms might indicate real trends and which are just transitions on a very short time scale. The two central notions in this book are identity and addiction. This first one is in transformation as persons get more and more connected without the need to label oneself to one particular group or sectarian. The term addiction suggested an unwanted side effect, while in fact no-body would label one's passion for reading books or playing the piano as addiction. This book helps you to make up your mind and acknowledge that web-based elements in society are growing and will exert on our awareness like gravity; first we will experience it as a load; later we cannot move without it.

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Piet Kommers is an early pioneer in media for cognitive- and social support. His doctoral research explored methods for hypertext and concept mapping in learning. Since 1982 he developed educational technology as an engineering approach for learning and teaching. His main thesis is that technology is catalytic for human ambition and awareness. His main function is associate professor in the University in Twente, The Netherlands and adjunct/visiting professor in various countries. He taught more than fifteen bachelor-, master- and PhD courses and supervised more than 30 PhD students. He instigated and coordinated the NATO Advanced Research Workshop on Cognitive Technologies in 1990 and a large series of Joint European Research Projects in: authoring multimedia, web-based learning, teacher education, virtual 3d worlds, constructivist learning, social media, web-based communities and international student exchange. UNESCO awarded his work in ICT for Education in Eastern Europe with the title of Honorary Professor. The Capital Normal University in Beijing awarded his work with the title of Honorary Doctor. He is member of advisory boards in ministries of education and academia of sciences in Singapore, Finland and Russia. Piet Kommers is the initiator of the international journal for web-based communities and overall chair of the IADIS conferences on societal applications of ICT. Since the late nineties he gave more than 40 invited and keynote lectures at main conferences in the fields of education, media and communication. His books and journal articles address the social and intellectual transformations at each transition from "traditional" into the "new" media. Instead of regarding media as extrapolating, supplanting, vicarious or even disruptive, Piet's view is that new media elicit and seduce both individuals and organizations to reconsider human nature and challenge existential awareness at that very moment.