

INVITED TALK

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EMERGING WEB NATIVE WORLD AND THE INSTITUTIONAL TIME LAG

1. Abstract

The papers attempts at answering a question what a new quality the present day Web–coined 2.0 – creates as a product of digital network technologies of cooperation and user generated contents. The Author reflects on the nature of this emergent phenomenon: to what extent it is an open participatory system of information/knowledge creation and distribution beyond markets and corporation, in what measure a new system of market regulation and in what degree a self-regulating and self-poietic system to use the Niklas Luhman’s term, and, finally, what cultural and institutional change it brings about.

One of the authors’ points is that we have to do with a critical point in new uses of the net which opens a new cycle of the information society, yet we are still in the institutional time lag. In the previous cycle the industrial society freed an individual from traditional pre-modern institutions and communities which controlled creation and circulation of ideas, information, knowledge, culture etc. that constituted the resources of power gate-keeping access to these. Industrial society destroyed certain institutions and organizations (feudal community – *Gemeinschaft* first and foremost), transformed the others (family, school, university, church etc.) and created new ones owing to new technological and social inventions and innovations (a new model of social organization – *Gesellschaft*). The liberation of people from the old institutions and organizations made for individualization but with the course of time the new economic, political and cultural structures emerged and a new cycle of information/knowledge gate-keeping came to life – new institutions of control of distribution and contents: mass media and culture industries. In the present

day cycle of institutional and cultural change a networked and networking individual once again liberates himself, owing to new media, from the control of access to information and knowledge, barriers of publications have been lowered nearly to the zero ground. This caused new emergent phenomena: organizational revolution, crisis of culture, social mobility and nomadism and the like. All this is occurring in the more and more complex social and technical environment which demands permanent adaptation. Invention of computer and even spread of the Internet did not bring about an institutional change. A dramatic expression of mis-adaptation of institutions and organization to the new logic of emerging system was the breakdown of dotcoms at the turn of millennia. Nowadays we are witnessing the outset of a process of creating a new participatory system which (like in the previous, industrial) cycle destroys certain institutions, transforms the other and brings the new ones into life. It is hard to say in what measure this tendency will prevail, whether or not it will be counter-balanced by a new one that will bring back the control of the new web native institutions over resources of information, knowledge and culture circulating in the net. We can hardly conceive what the absorption of digital space by the new institutional and cultural system really means. For sure, it offers an unprecedented opportunity to experiment and create new social realities. It is an excellent form of spreading new concepts of virtual work, ownership, services. Spread of markets on virtual goods produces a new economic and cultural expansion. Most of these goods are self-referential which per se and doubles the consumer offer on the new digital territory.

To get a better grip of the nature of this change a general conceptual framework has to be conceived that is based on legitimate principles of power and freedom in networks.

2. Biography

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Photo sent by speaker

Prof. Kazimierz Krzysztofek graduated from the Jagiellonian University School of Law and got PhD in sociology at the Warsaw University. His fields of research include the impact of information technology on the arts; sociology of Internet, e-culture, IT and human development, culture and knowledge industry, IT and civil society. Since 1994 (until 2000) he worked at the Institute of Culture as Director for Research. He has been Professor of Sociology at the University of Bialystok since 1997, and a member of the Polish Academy of Science Committee for Forecasting "Poland 2000Plus" since 1995. Since 2000 he has been professor of sociology in the Warsaw School of Advanced Social Psychology in Warsaw. He is also a member of the International Studies Association, as well as a member and former board member of the European network of research institutes on culture and culture documentation centers (CIRCLE). Since 2002 he has been vice-president of the Warsaw Foundation Pro Cultura. In 1987/88 he was senior Fulbright scholar in the MIT Center for International Studies (Program on International Communication) and in 1996, a visiting lecturer at the Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa. He has published widely and received numerous awards and honours.