New Millennium or New Dark Ages?
ADCS99 Keynote Address

Roger Clarke
Principal, Xamax Consultancy Pty Ltd, Canberra
Visiting Fellow, Department of Computer Science,
Australian National University

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presentation*

Abstract

At the end of the twentieth century, documents of all kinds are available to an extent, with a degree of convenience, and for costs so low, that our forebears would be unable to believe our good fortune.

There's a common presumption that the Internet is "bringing in the millennium", and is ensuring that we achieve and sustain openness, the end of inequities in the distribution of information, democracy, and human self-fulfilment.

Any such conclusion would be premature. The digital era has ambushed and beguiled us all. Its first-order impacts are being assimilated, but its second-order implications are not. Powerful institutions perceive their interests to be severely threatened by the last decade of technological change and by the shape of the "information economy" and "information society". During the coming decade, we will see a fightback by those institutions, who will implement technological countermeasures, and demand and gain changes to the law.

About the Speaker

Roger Clarke is a consultant in the management of information and information technology. He works through his own company, and in conjunction with the leading electronic commerce consultancy ETC - Electronic Trading Concepts Pty Ltd. He has particular expertise in electronic commerce, information infrastructure, and privacy and dataveillance. His work encompasses corporate strategy, government policy and public advocacy.

He holds degrees in Information Systems from UNSW, and a doctorate from the ANU. He was made an ACS Fellow in 1985, and awarded a ComputerWorld Fellowship and an IFIP Outstanding Service Award, both in 1992. In April 1996, and again in April 1997, he was named by Information Age magazine as one of the 50 most influential people in IT&T in Australia.

He has spent 30 years in the IT industry, as professional, manager, consultant and academic. This included more than a decade as a senior information systems academic at the Australian National University. He continues as a Visiting Fellow in the ANU's Department of Computer Science.

Some of the particular areas in which he has been recently active include electronic commerce policy and strategy; smart card policy and strategy; electronic payment mechanisms; electronic publishing; information infrastructure policy; Intranet and Extranet strategies; privacy strategy for corporations and government agencies; and specific technological threats to information privacy.

He has been an active participant in Internet communities throughout the 1990s, through seminars, conference papers, e-lists and a substantial set of community-service web-pages, including the world's most authoritative pages on *Waltzing Matilda*.