

*Wizards, Bureaucrats, Warriors and Hackers: Writing The History of the Internet* (1998),

Roy Rosenzweig

Roy Rosenzweig is an historian who is discussing the way that the creation of the internet is studied, interpreted and given as an historical information. Since the internet represents a very recent subject of discussion and of progress in our societies, it brought different opinions about the origins of its creation, its consequences and about what it represents or indirect messages it carried. Therefore, the study of the way it is going to be taught in a neutral and objective point of view (as historical facts) is important to lean over, as what Roy Rosenzweig is doing. Different journalists and writers wrote about it and thus are given as influencers of the way of interpretation of a population, since they are giving the information through a selection of it and a way of talking about it. A neutral position for institutional study is hard to have due to the context of the creation of a new communicative technology and system which led to the what we call now the internet. This context is a complex mixture of political and military needs during the Cold War, of the technological engineering and development rise and of the social changes that occurred. Roy Rosenzweig describes well the division between the interpretations of the Internet's history in four different perspectives: biographic, bureaucratic, ideological and social. He compares those last by citing theorist's, journalist's, author's and professional's statements (principally focus on Hafner and Lyon, Norberg and O'Neill, Paul Edward, Michael and Ronda Hauben) which give different analysis on the subject. Hafner and Lyon in their book are giving a peaceful vision by putting forward "whizzes" or "great men" who created the Arpanet without any intentions of supporting or surviving the war by the means of a new medium of communication. Norbreg and O'Neill are denying this by putting forward the bureaucratic way of seeing progress; they are celebrating the marriage of defense and computer technology. Besides, Paul Edward strays away from this field and focus on a more theoretical study in the studies of cultures, which led to an analysis demonstrating that differences between social groups in the society shaped the development of technology since computers was a new source of power and knowledge. At last, Roy Rosenzweig reviews Michael and Ronda Hauben's social perspective which is to give the responsibility of the rising internet to "netizens", therefore any internet user from the population who popularized this new medium. A new kind of citizens, a regenerative and vibrant community which devoted time and effort in order to put the internet in a more accessible place: those actions where influenced by capitalism. In a nutshell, Roy Rosenzweig shows in an interesting way how challenging it was (and still is) to select information and perspectives with the intention of creating objective and institutionalized ones for historical data, specially when it concerns subjects linking up a lot of different domains and interpretations, like the creation of the internet.