Falé Do

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DART 449 The Language of the Web

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Reflection on "The Virtual Revolution: The Great Levelling"

This first part of this documentary talks about the fast progress and rise of Internet, specifically blogs, Wikipedia and YouTube. It also discusses the ongoing clash between the freedom and the technology offered to society, and it elaborates about the desire of a culture to control and make profit.

From my understanding, it is about freedom people as in they do not want their privacy to be poked at and have the freedom to surf the Internet without being tracked. Yet people still want to use the technology and see it as an "empowering tool" and "ultimate leveller." The issue the journalist is talking about is how the web is super charging information during the virtual revolution at the end of the 20th century compared to things during the Industrial Revolution. That said, the notion of the promise of giving people access to information in untold ways and the notion of hierarchy and authority over the structure of information are conflicting each other, which is what causes all the uproar with the rise of the World Wide Web. For example, as observed, the whole leveling part is mostly about the control of information, particularly about who controls information and what that piece of information does. Nonetheless, information does not always come from the elites at the highest levels, but from the levels below—from the "normal" or "middle-class" people. Having said that, this means that anyone can alter information, and can possibly provide misinformation, especially on Wikipedia.

I think this documentary teaching us by spreading a message saying that "freedom could be ugly if not well-used." So what I mean by this is that the people who create the web meant to

provide information with good intentions, for instance gathering people's data for the sake of improving the web, and yet there are people out there, being a jokester or coming from social media, who destroy the promise of proving information by claiming their rights and freedom. I meant I certainly agree that once information is published online, anyone can use, refer and alter that information but this is a certain limit and with all due respect, that information should be considered seriously before altering it. In other words, the people who think to alter the information should make sure their information are valid to do so and should see if the provided information is worth changing. Anyhow, I meant to say that information provided on the web should be handle cautiously and people should have a conscience when absorbing these information—to believe or not to believe. That said, as we cannot escape this reality of living in the virtual world, we have to learn how to live with it, especially when we are always connected and online.

Bibliography

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