

...a belief in what media scholar and political economist Vincent Mosco calls “the digital sublime”: the complex of myths surrounding the internet. As Mosco puts it, the internet provides us with:

A story about how ever smaller, faster, cheaper, and better computer and communication technologies help to realize, with little effort, those seemingly impossible dreams of democracy and community with practically no pressure on the natural environment Moreover, the story continues, computer networks offer relatively inexpensive access, making possible a primary feature of democracy, that the tools necessary to empowerment are equally available to all. Furthermore, this vision of the internet fosters community because it enables people to communicate with one another in any part of the world. (Mosco 30–31)

—Kruse, p.634

- What do you think of this vision of the internet?
- How does this affect fan/audience communication?

Market relations are generally seen as utilitarian, meaning that they are means to other ends, while friendships are ends in their own right. They are also fungible, as any seller is interchangeable with any other seller. Yet 'the features of instrumentality, fungibility, impersonality, and so on are neither peculiar to market relations, nor an all-or-nothing affair; rather, they are present in varying degrees in both market and nonmarket relationships, including friendship' (Badhwar, 2008: 312). 'Even relationships that come into being for purely instrumental reasons have a noninstrumental dimension,' argues Badhwar (2008: 314), 'because people are not mere instruments to each other's ends, but ends in themselves.' Friendship, economic production, and artistic production are motivated by similar desires to exercise 'creative or productive powers in worthwhile enterprises' (Badhwar, 2008: 314)

—Baym, p.290

- Do you agree with this assessment of market relations and friendships as overlapping?
- How does this play into fandom?