Week 1 Weblog

This week's readings can be characterized in differently for Tuesday's and Thursday's

lecture. For Tuesday's lecture, the readings discuss the parallels the effect of previous

technologies and the internet we know today. For Thursday's lecture, the three readings

collectively inform the reader that "the internet" is an oversimplification of a rather complex

system.

In "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph" by James W. Carey, Carey

discusses the invention of the telegraph and its effects on American society at the time of its

invention. The notable example in the article of the telegraph's influence is how it helped

develop American time zones. The way the telegraph was able to help with the development of

American time zones was because "The telegraph could send time faster than a railroad car could

move; and therefore it facilitated the temporal coordination and integration of the entire system."

When I think of the telegraph, I laugh at its limited capacity because I am able thousands of more

activities on the computer I am typing on right now than the telegraph could ever do. However, I

see the relation of the telegraph's power and the internet's capabilities. I'm sure the telegraph

was able to have the enormous, innovative effects that are similar to what the internet does for

Americans today. It's the drastic jump and degree of change that the telegraph and internet made

that makes their effects of moving different sectors of American life forward similar. This

realization is what "The Master of Switch" chapter speaks and expand upon.

In the beginnings of "The Master of Switch" by Tim Wu, Wu creates the concept of "The

Cycle" in which information technologies go from enormous potentials that regular citizens

utilize to better their society to being commodities that large corporations try to monetize and monopolize. Wu gives us a clear descriptions of how information technologies such as telephony, radio, and television, were "novelties" that were quickly made the foundations of NBC, CBS, and Hollywood. Relating this idea today with the internet, I saw someone yesterday reading a book called "The Four" by Scott Galloway. It was about the big four companies in technology today: Apple, Amazon, Facebook, and Google. All four of these companies have taken advantage of the internets' possibilities and we hear in the news about these companies gaining immense control over our everyday interactions on the internet.

The three articles for Thursday's readings all talk about aspects of how we over-simplify our ideas of the internet. As was articulated in lecture, most people think the internet is just the world-wide-web. These three readings expanded my concept of how much more complicated the internet is. The article on how to build a low-tech internet made me think of all the different components that go into creating a network and how much more complicated it gets on a global level. "Not *The* Internet, but *This* Internet: How Othernets Illuminate Our Feudal Internet" by Paul Dourish had a big takeaway for me: Using the phrase "the internet", as most of do, limits our understanding of other networks that are out there. I get it. It seems like human nature to try and take a complex idea and try to relate to your everyday interactions. Lastly "Engineering a Principle: 'End to End' in the Design of the Internet" by Tarleton Gillespie looks at the internet through different lenses such as political and legal settings. These readings show us there are many aspects we need to look at when considering the contraction and impact of the internet.