

I'm grateful to be introduced to the history of the internet and be confronted not with a single canonical History but instead with the beautiful complexity and plurality that is the many sometimes complimentary, sometimes contradictory histories of the internet. Being that this is a "brief" history I also appreciate that much of the historiographical analysis is done for me as Rosenzweig speaks explicitly to the academic backgrounds of, and the economic and institutional contexts in which the authors wrote their histories – helping to explain why varying emphasis is placed on different aspects of the internet's past in the presented works.

I found particularly relevant the discussion surrounding the binary roots of the internet: for at the same time the internet provided and still provides the potential for both awesome increases *and* decreases in the centralization of capital, information... and ultimately – power. Rosenzweig made sense of these contradictory potentials and forces by placing the internet's histories within the similarly polar political context of 60's America. The article painted the picture of the establishment on one side: a big post-war, bureaucratic, military focused government (thanks in large part to FDR's recent consolidations in federal power) acting as the centralizing "closed world" force; while Rosenzweig places counter-culture movements of the 60's on the other side: Hippies, politically minded computer hobbyists turned hackers, disenfranchised computer science students providing inclusive alternatives to exclusive military networks... all of these players are cited as forces of decentralization in the early days of internet. This history gives context to the differing contemporary philosophies surrounding the extent to which the internet should be free in a socialist decentralized (yet regulated) sense or should be free in the economic (tending towards centralization) capitalist sense.