A Brief History of the Internet – Response

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I’m very grateful to be **introduced** to the history of the internet and be immediately confronted not with a single canonical narrative, but instead with the beautiful complexity that is the plurality of the many sometimes complimentary, sometimes contradictory histor*ies* of the internet. Being that this is a “brief” history I also appreciat that much of the historiographical analysis is done for me as Rosenzweig speaks 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 internets histories.

I found particularly useful and relevant talk surrounding the binary roots of the internet: at the same the time the internet provided the potential for both awesome increases and decreases in centralization of capital, information… and ultimately -- power. Rosenzweig made sense of these contradictory potentials and forces by placing the internets’ histories within the similarly polar political context of 60’s America. The article painted the picture of on one hand the establishment: 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 seemed to place counter-culture movements of the 60’s on the other side: hippies, politically minded computer hobbyists turned hackers, and disenfranchised computer science students who wanted provide alternatives to the exclusive military networks for communities sake, 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 surroundings the extent to which the internet should be free in socialist decentralized sense, or should be free in the economic (centralized) capitalist sense.

in the form not only of hippies, but also taking the form of computer hobbiest turned hackers and disenchrachaised computer science students who wanted to be included in Darpa on the other hand acting as the decentralizing force. It helps put into context differing contemporary philsophies sourrondings the extent to which the internet should be free in the socialist decentralized sense, and to what extent it should be free in the economic capitalist sense.

as the centralizing force; while the counter culture and hacker acts as the decentralizing force.

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on different placed.

– in this case a history – presented from the start with the complexity of the topic at hand through the mention of many differing interpretations and hisgraphical frameworks.

Really like this approach of surveys in general, where they are basic summaries of canon works. I also love how the author speaks directly to problems of histography, and speaks to the academic backgrounds, and economic/institution contexts through which the authors were writing in which may explain their particular emphasizes on particular subjects.

Loved the discussion of the binary nature of the internert: permitting (depending on usage) for both vast increases and decreases in the centralization of capital, information… power. Especially putting this into the political context of the 60’s, the establishment 🡪 big, post-war and therefore big government (thanks in large part to FDR’s consolidations) versus counter culture movements like the hippies but also the hackers and certain relatively disenfrachaised computer science students excluded from the military’s networks.

It’s great to get such variety of views as my intro to the internets history.