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CART351

Reflection 4

In “Enabling the distributed web”, Carson Farmer discusses the benefits of a content-addressed internet compared the current system which is location-addressed. The main disadvantage of that current system is that although thousands of people can access the same file from thousands of different locations, whoever controls the location of that file ultimately controls the access to it. This thus opens the path to potential abuse such as censorship, surveillance, loss of net neutrality etc... while also making the internet vulnerable to link-rot as the internet trends change and servers are updated. Farmer cites a 2014 study which found that as much as half of the URLs in the U.S. Supreme Court opinions no longer work, and the average lifespan of a web page is only around 100 days. (Farmer)

So the internet is ephemeral... We are somehow used to the idea that what is on the internet exists forever but it sure is problematic if the content is here but lost because the link is not working anymore. Kind of like playing a Shrodinger’s cat game. With the advent of computers, human history is no longer purely physical. There will be bricks and paintings but there will be even more files, photos and videos being produced daily as proof of our existence. If no change is made to how the internet works and we keep it like this then does it mean that in a few years from now, we would have internet archaeologists looking to find more about how the human beings lived in 2021. Would this be a possible thing?

Works Cited

Farmer, Carson. "Enabling the Distributed Web." *Textile*, 24 June 2018,
<https://medium.com/textileio/enabling-the-distributed-web-abf7ab33b638>.