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PROJECT

Critical Issues in Global Internet Culture

My research resolves around the presumably "global" aspect of Internet culture. In Western cyberculture, the "global" nature of information technologies is often taken for granted. There is an obvious lack of reflection on what it exactly means when different cultures and highly unequal societies and regions get together online. Global often means little more than the exchange between a limited number of "cool" global cities where the Western "creative class" is located, such as Berlin, Melbourne, San Francisco or Barcelona. The Internet is reduced to what monolingual Anglo-American scholars can read. The fact that for a number of years already English has been a minority language has had little or no impact in new media representations. Case studies will revolve around topics such as Internet governance and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the rise of NGOs and so-called "global civil society", the developments in India and the Delhi-based new media center Sarai in particular and a number of general concepts such as "free cooperation" and "organized networks".

Recommended Reading
Lovink, Geert. Dark Fiber: Tracking Critical Internet Culture. Cambrdige, MA: MIT Press, 2002.
-. Uncanny Networks. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.
-. My First Recession: Critical Internet Culture in Transition. Rotterdam:
V2-/Nai, 2003.

Blogging, the Nihilist Impulse

The opening essay that I have written for my upcoming book (Routledge New York, 2007) aims to formulate a theory of blogs beyond the 'citizen journalism' rhetoric. This book that I hope to finish during my stay at Wiko, will be volume III of a series on critical Internet culture. Earlier titles were Dark Fiber (MIT Press, 2002) and My First Recession (V2-NAi, 2003). In my talk I will outline where we are in terms of the uptake and use of the Internet, worldwide. I distinguish three phases: 1. The academic, pre-commercial, text-only period before the World Wide Web. 2. The euphoric, speculative period in which the Internet opened up for the general audience, culminating in the late nineties dotcommania. 3. Post-dotcom crash/post 9-11 period, which is now coming to a close with the current so-called 'Web 2.0' hype.

Blogs are successors of the 90s "homepage" and create mix of the private (online dairy) and the public (PR-management of the self). As there are tens of millions of blogs it is next to impossible to make general statements about their 'nature'. I will nonetheless do this. It is of strategic importance to develop critical categories of a theory of blogging that takes the specific mixture of technology, interface design, software architecture and social networking into account.

Instead of merely looking into the emancipatory potential of blogs, or emphasize its counter-cultural folklore, I see blogs as part of a unfolding process of 'massification' of this, still, new medium. What the Internet after 2000 lost is the "illusion of change". The created void made way for large-scale, interlinked conversations through automated software, named weblogs, or blogs.

After a general introduction into net culture I will present my specific work that centres around the often voiced criticism that blogs are cynical and nihilist, because they merely comment and dump on the establishment (be it leftist, liberal or conservative). Instead of trying to prove that blogs are, in essence, good, I have taken up the challenge to interprete blogs as nihilist vehicles. Nihilism is not a lifestyle or opinion but a condition in which (Western) societies find themselves. In the Internet context it is not evil, as Rüdiger Safranski suggested, but triviality that forms the drama of media freedom.

Blogs bring on decay. Each new blog adds to the fall of the media system that once dominated the twentieth century. What's declining is the Belief in the Message. That's the nihilist moment and blogs facilitate this culture like no platform has done before. Blog software assists users in their crossing from Truth to Nothingness. The printed and broadcasted message has lost its aura. News is consumed as a commodity with entertainment value. Instead of presenting blog entries as mere self promotion, we should interpret them as decadent artifacts that remotely dismantle the broadcast model.

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOWS' LIBRARY

Lovink, Geert (Amsterdam,2022)

Stuck on the platform : reclaiming the internet

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1793811385

Making public

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1793811385

Lovink, Geert (Bielefeld,2017)

Im Bann der Plattformen : die nächste Runde der Netzkritik

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=842290583

Digitale Gesellschaft

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=842290583

Lovink, Geert (Amsterdam,2013)

Unlike us reader : social media monopolies and their alternatives

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INC Reader ; 8

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Lovink, Geert (Amsterdam,2013)

The inner life of video spheres ; theory for the YouTube generation

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=739344692

Network Notebook ; 6

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Lovink, Geert (Bielefeld,2012)

Das halbwegs Soziale : eine Kritik der Vernetzungskultur

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=679767355

Networks without a cause <dt.>

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Lovink, Geert (Amsterdam,2011)

The Glitch moment(um)

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Lovink, Geert (Bruno Mondadori,2008)

Zero comments : teoria critica di Internet

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Zero comments

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Lovink, Geert (Bielefeld,2008)

Zero Comments : Elemente einer kritischen Internetkultur

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Lovink, Geert (New York, NY [u.a.],2008)

Zero comments : blogging and critical Internet culture

https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=525100016

Lovink, Geert (Amsterdam,2007)

MyCreativity reader : a critique of creative industries

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