In search of historical roots of the Information Society (IS)

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Informational Capitalism and Capitalist Media Today
Agenda for studying the history of ideas

Four windows to the idea of IS

1. Personal
2. Institutional
3. Conceptual
4. Critical
Personal: My way to the IS

- 1972 committee on communication policy – media expansion by cable, satellite, video, etc
- 1975 textbook *Tiedotusoppi* – information explosion as paradigm (Edwin Parker et al)
- 1976 criticism of societal information as indoctrination (Jan Ekecrantz et al)
Institutional: International-political structures facilitating the IS idea

- OECD computer/telecommunications policy – 1970s
- CSSR-USSR scientific-technological revolution – 1970s
- IIASA scientific project of détente – 1970s
- EU boosting economic growth – 1990s
- WSIS as final legitimation – 2000s
Conceptual: Themes & thinkers of IS paradigm
(with Frank Webster)

In the 1960-70s

• Knowledge industry (Fritz Machlup 1962)
• Global village (Marshall McLuhan 1962)
• Civilization at crossroads (Radovan Richta 1967)
• Information society (Yoneji Masuda 1968)
• Age of discontinuity (Peter F. Drucker 1969)
• Programmed society (Alain Touraine 1971)
• Post-industrial society (Daniel Bell 1973)
• Information economy (Edwin Parker, Marc Porat 1975)
• Future shock (Alvin Toffler 1976)
Conceptual, cont.

In the 1980-90s

• Computerization of society (Simon Noran et al 1980)
• Technologies of freedom (Ithiel de Sola Pool 1983)
• Crisis economy (Herbert I. Schiller 1984)
• Cult of Information (Theodore Roszak 1986)
• Virtual community (Howard Rheingold 1993)
• Knowledge societies (Nico Stehr 1994)
• Postmodern society (Krishan Kumar, Mark Poster 1995)
• Network society (Manuel Castells 1996)
Conceptual, cont.

In the 2000s

• Runaway world (Anthony Giddens 2000)
• Surveillance society (David Lyon 2001)
• Personalised networking (Barry Wellman 2001)
• Commons (Lawrence Lessig 2002)
• Ubiquitous (Ken Sakamura 2007)
• Cocooning (Cass Sunstein 2009)
• Shallows (Nicholas Carr 2010)
• Internet governance (Wolfgang Kleinwächter 2011)
Conceptual, cont.

Levels of consideration

• Technology
• Economy
• Human
• Governance
Critical: Elements of big story behind the IS

• Information as productive force
• Mediation in social relations
• Globalization
• Capitalism
Thank you!

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