

Department of Media and Communications public lecture

Imagining the Internet: policy challenges

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LSE events Suggested hashtag for Twitter users:
#LSEMansell

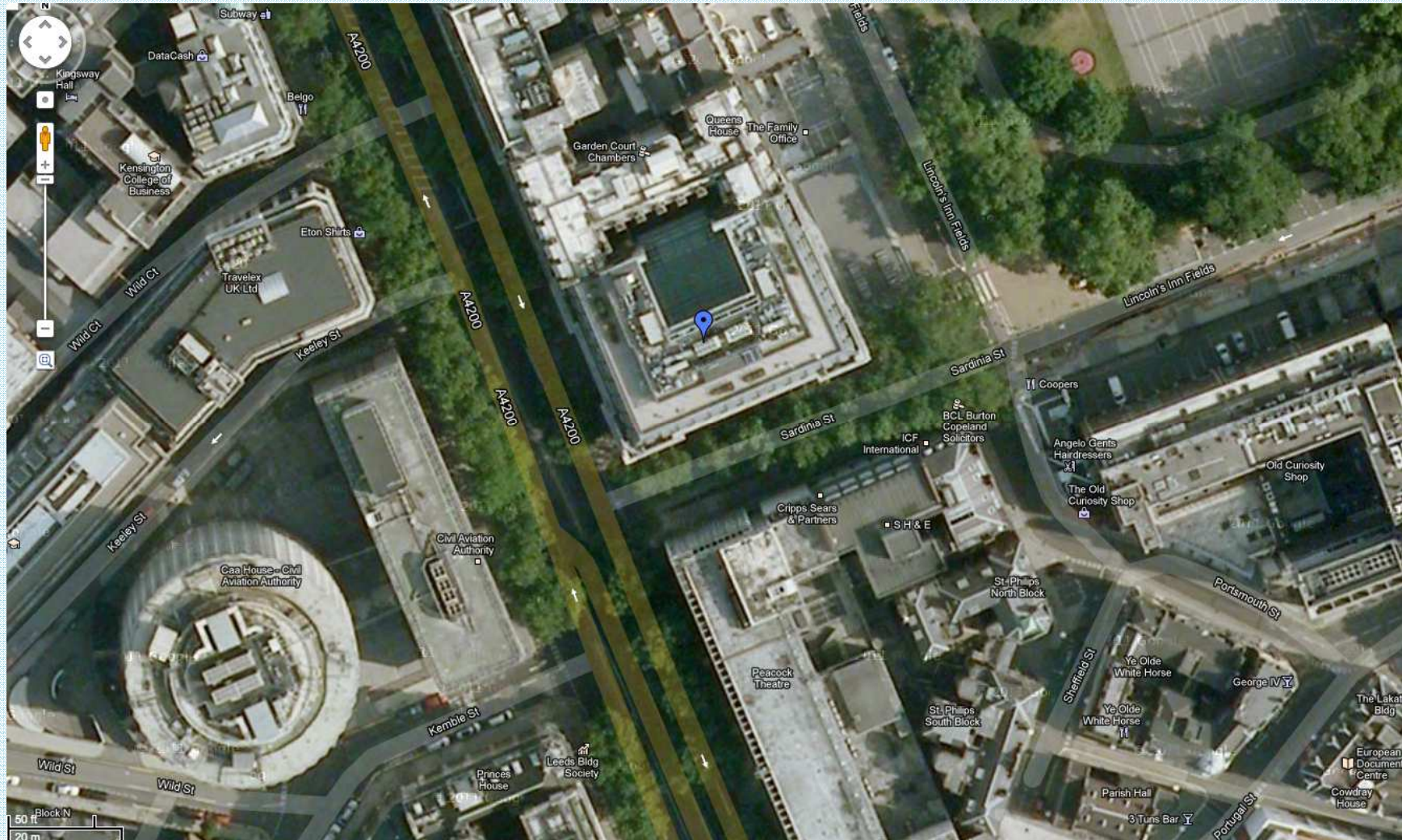


Imagining the Internet: Policy Challenges

Professor Robin Mansell



Mapping where we are in time and space



Social Imaginaries

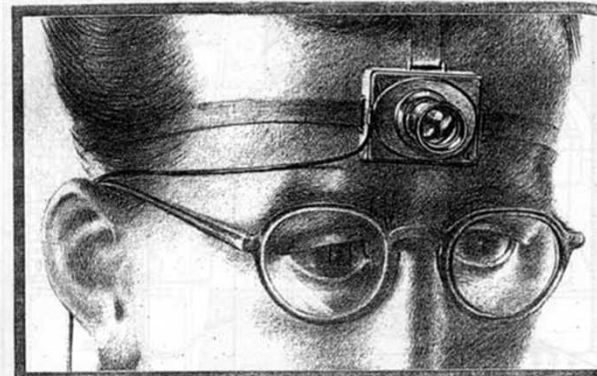
How people imagine their social existence.

“.. how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations”.

(Charles Taylor 2007)

Pre-Internet World (1930s / 1940s / 1960s)

Entertainment and Information Processing and Control



A SCIENTIST OF THE FUTURE RECORDS EXPERIMENTS WITH A TEST CAMERA FITTED WITH UNIVERSAL-FOCUS LENS. THE SMALL SQUARE IN THE EYEGLASS AT THE LEFT SHOWS THE ONE

AS WE MAY THINK

A TOP U. S. SCIENTIST FORESEES A POSSIBLE FUTURE WORLD IN WHICH MAN-MADE MACHINES WILL START TO THINK

by VANNEVAR BUSH

DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
Condensed from the Atlantic Monthly, July 1945

This has not been a scientists' war; it has been a war in which all have had a part. The scientists, baring their old professional competition in the demand of a common cause, have shared greatly and learned much. It has been exhilarating to work in effective partnership. What are the scientists to do next?

For the biologists, and particularly for the medical scientists, there can be little indication, for their war work has hardly required them to leave the old paths. Many indeed have been able to carry on their war research in their familiar peacetime laboratories. Their objectives remain much the same.

It is the physicists who have been thrown most violently off stride, who have left academic pursuits for the making of strange derivative gadgets, who have had to devise new methods for their unanticipated assignments. They have done their part on the devices that made it possible to turn back the enemy. They have worked in combined effort with the physicians of our allies. They have felt within themselves the stir of achievement. They have been part of a great team. Now one asks what they will find objectively worthy of their best.

There is a growing mountain of research. But there is increased evidence that we are being bogged down today as specialization extends. The investigator is staggered by the findings and conclusions of thousands of other workers—conclusions which he cannot find time to grasp, much less to remember, as they appear. Yet specialization becomes increasingly necessary for progress, and the effort to bridge between disciplines is correspondingly superficial.

Professionally our methods of transmitting and reviewing the results of research are generations old and by now are totally inadequate for their purpose. If the aggregate time spent in writing scholarly works and in reading them could be evaluated, the ratio between these amounts of time will well be startling. Those who conscientiously attempt to keep abreast of their thought, even in restricted fields, by close and continuous reading will find they are away from an examination calculated to show how much of the previous month's efforts could be produced on call.

Mendel's concept of the laws of genetics was lost to the world for a generation because his publications did not reach the few who were capable of grasping and extending it. This sort of catastrophe is undoubtedly being repeated all about us as truly significant statements become lost in the mass of the inconsequential.

Publication has been extended far beyond our present ability to make use of the record. The summation of human experience is being expanded at a prodigious rate, and the means we use for threading through the most recent mass to the momentarily important item is the same as was used the days of square-rigged ships.

But there are signs of a change as new and powerful instruments come into use. Photocells capable of seeing things in a physical sense, sound photography which can record what is seen or even what is felt, thermionic tubes capable of controlling point forces under the guidance

MACHINE DREAMS

ECONOMICS BECOMES A CYBORG SCIENCE



Philip Mirowski

Convergence and Digital Content Towards a Mash-up Participatory Culture



Choice

Free content
Paid for by us
directly

Paid by subscription
or membership
Paid for by
advertising, or
subsidised by other
products/events

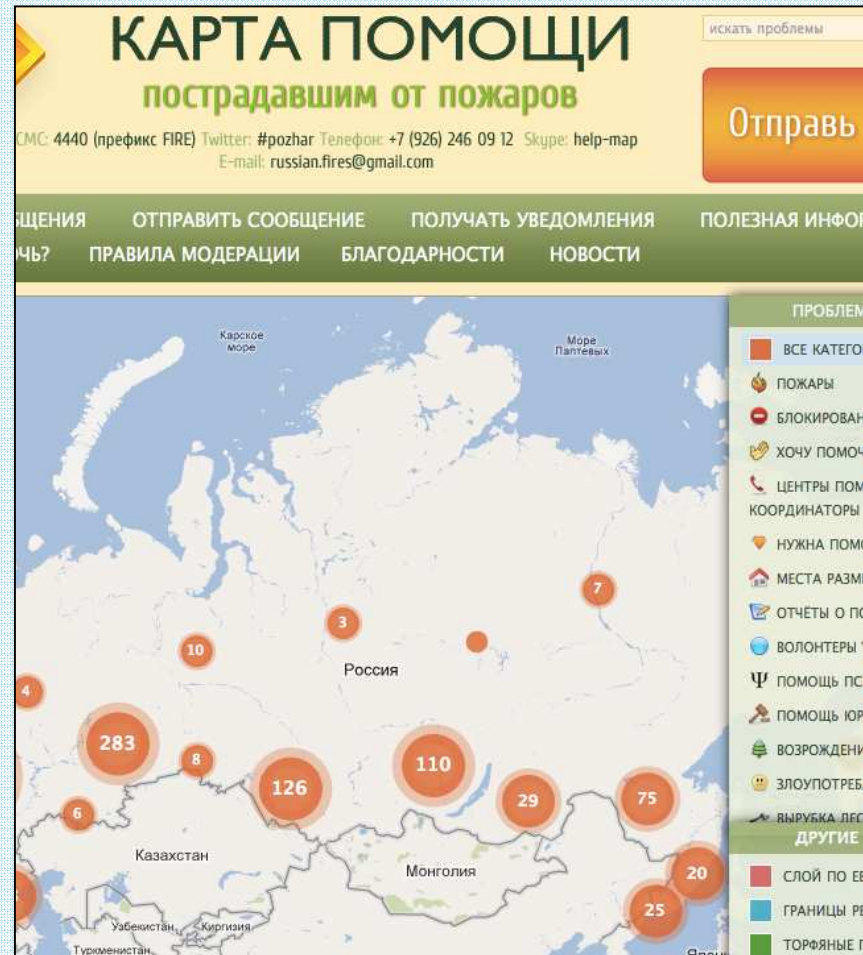


Data, Hardware & Software for Development



Social Media Applications

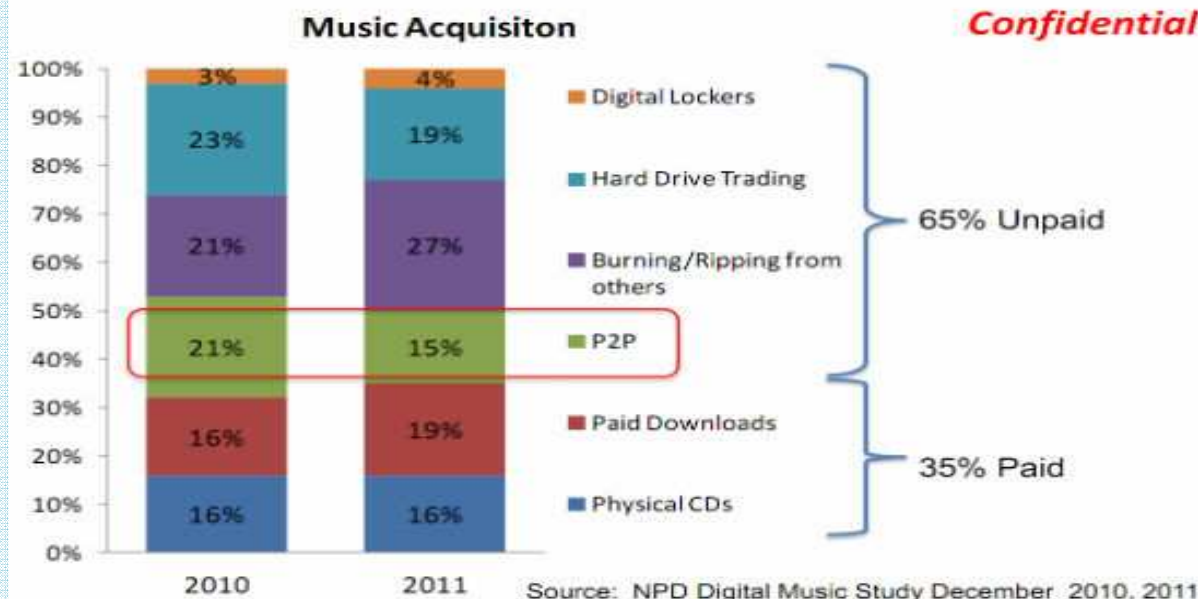
Emergency - Russian Wildfires Help Map



But the question is who sets the norms and conventions for how we interact in a world mediated by the Internet?

Whose norms count the most now and in the future?

But the Majority of Music Acquired Still Comes From Illegal Sources



HIGHEST PIRACY		LOWEST PIRACY	
Georgia	95%	United States	20%
Zimbabwe	92%	Japan	21%
Bangladesh	91%	Luxembourg	21%
Moldova	91%	New Zealand	22%
Armenia	90%	Australia	25%
Yemen	90%	Austria	25%
Sri Lanka	89%	Belgium	25%
Azerbaijan	88%	Finland	25%
Libya	88%	Sweden	25%
Belarus	87%	Switzerland	25%

Online Sharing and Digital Piracy



About

Share, Remix, Reuse — Legally

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that develops, supports, and stewards legal and technical infrastructure that maximizes digital creativity, sharing, and innovation.



Digital Economy Act 2010



'Friends' and Stock Market Valuations



Facebook passes 1 billion users in October 2012, share price drops from \$42 to \$21 in 2012.
Google share price opens in 2004 at \$85 and goes to \$767 today.

Is Techno-economic or Social Policy the Main Driver and Whose Values Count?

**Open Government –
Open Data**

**Network Neutrality
- Open Internet**

Democracy



Vince Cerf
'Father of the Internet'
"Online communities
are real communities"
1974

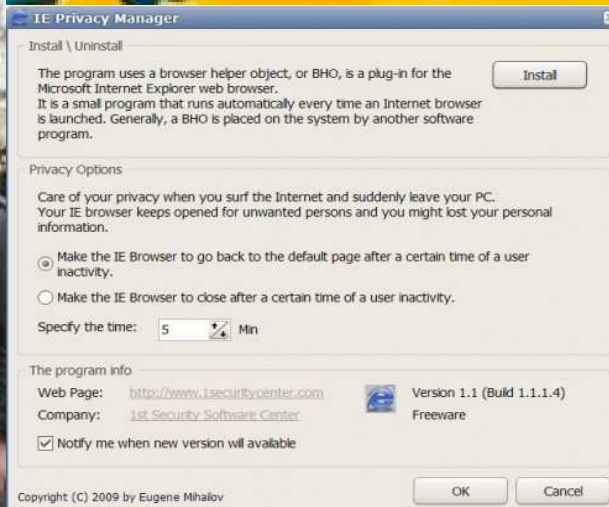


Tim Berners-Lee
Inventor of the
World Wide Web,
1989

Safety, Security and Privacy

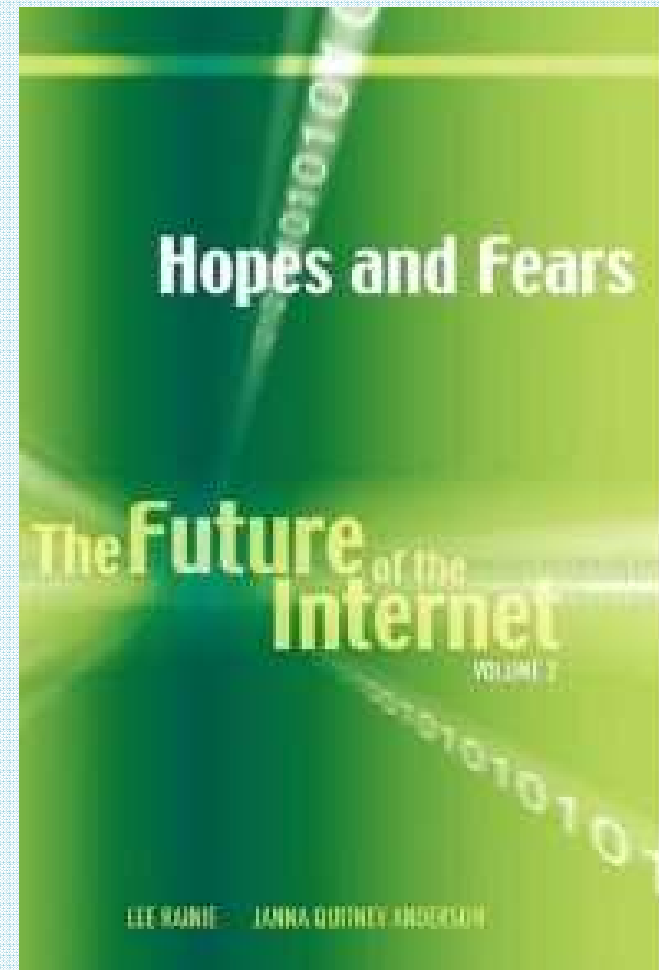
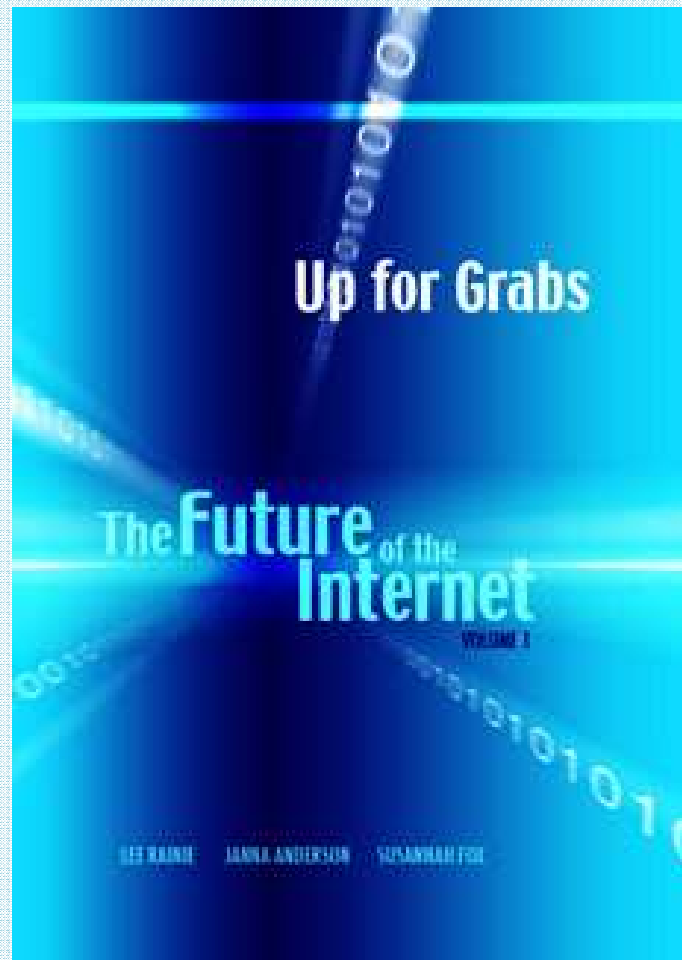


EMAIL SURVEILLANCE
Government will be able to monitor emails



Draft Communications Data Bill

So, what future – what hopes and fears?



Will we become 'alone together'?
Will we become 'overconnected'?



Imaginaries of the Internet

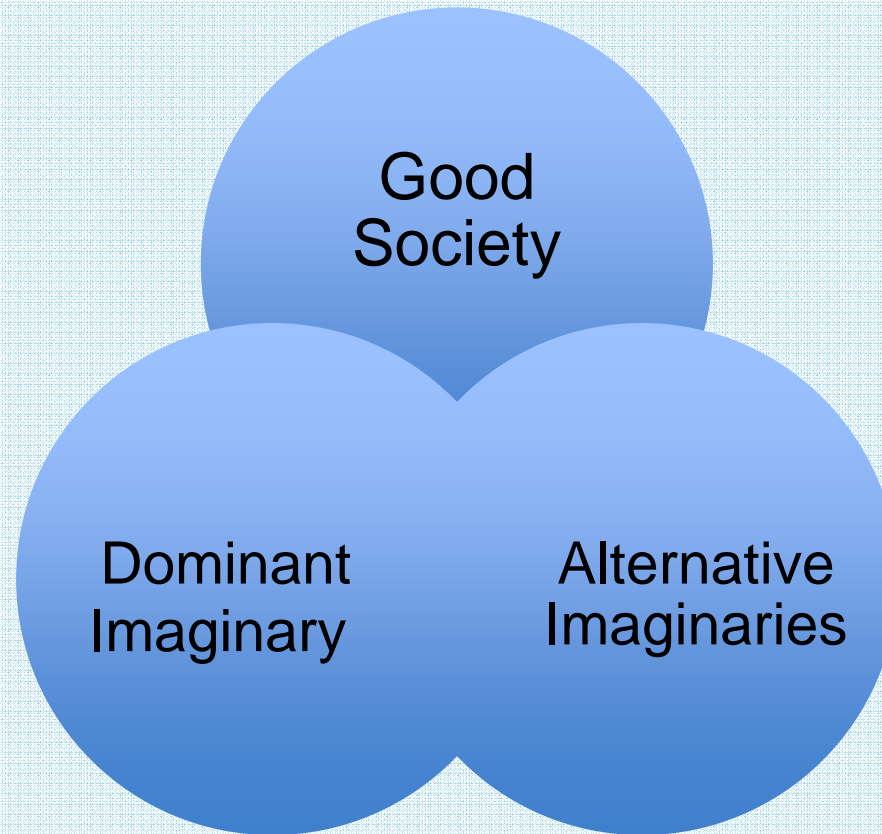
Dominant

- Digital innovation -> mastery of environment
- Choice is maximised
- Copyright **enforcement** creates best incentives for production
- **Do not regulate the Internet**, regulation infringes on human rights

Alternatives

- Digital innovation -> mastery of environment
- Choice is maximised
- Open information **sharing** creates best incentives for production, **loosen copyright** restrictions
- **Do not regulate the Internet**, regulation infringes on human rights

Social Imaginaries of the Internet

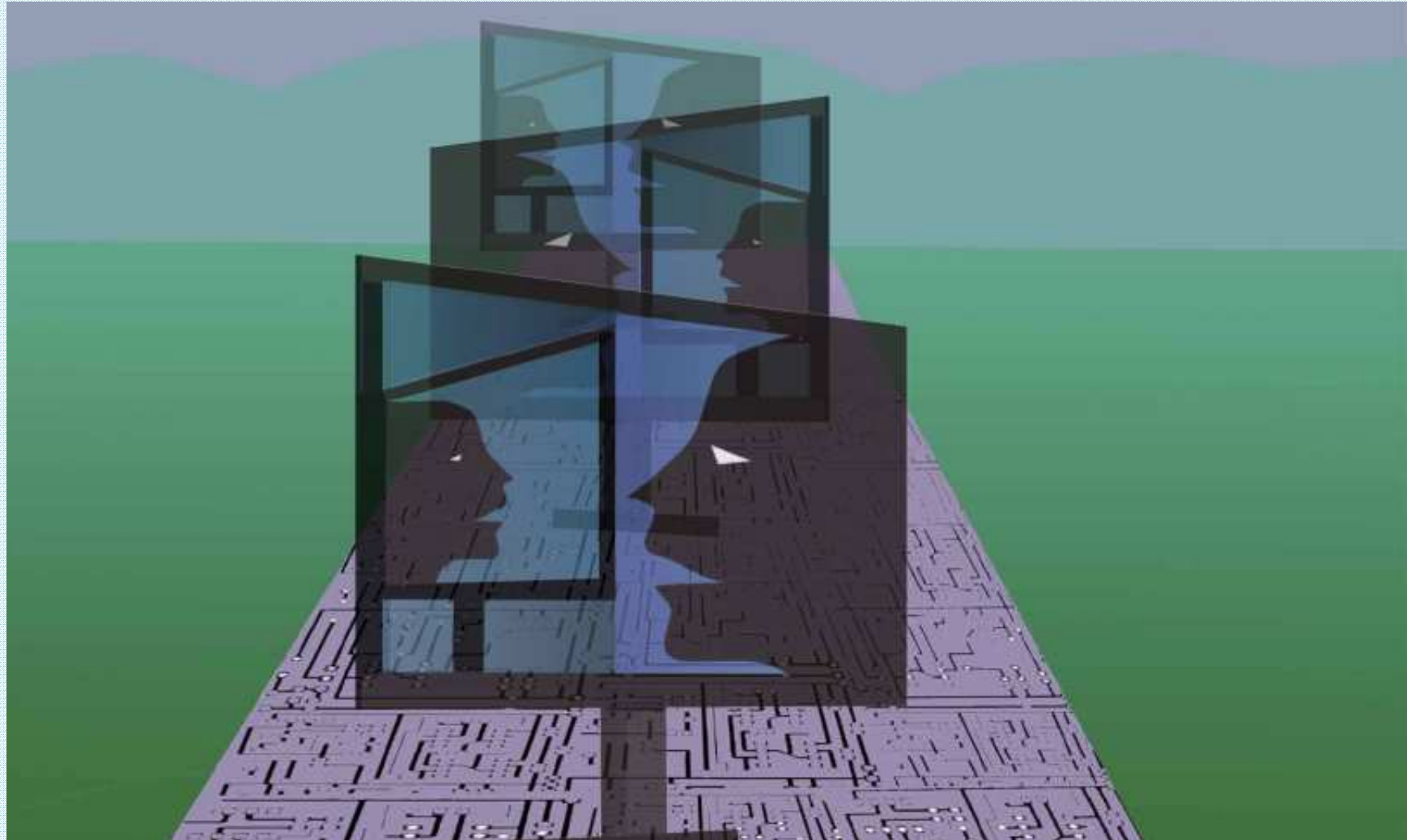


**Progress towards realisation of one is
imagined as being damaging to
realisation of other.**

Is There a Need for Policy Intervention?

- Improved accountability at all levels, local and global.
 - Leaving outcomes of innovation in the complex Internet Age to unaccountable groups means **adapting whether the result is benign or otherwise**.
- New combinations of top down and bottom up governance are needed – not necessarily ‘regulation’.
 - Why? The **automation of everyday life** is cumulative
 - What is possible today may become (even more) excessive in the future.
- Policy measures are needed to:
 - Roll back expansionist copyright legislation.
 - Limit intrusive surveillance of citizens online and offline.

**What kind of Internet Age
are you imagining now?**



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