

Book Reviews

Janna Quitney Anderson, Lee Rainie (eds.): *The Future of the Internet II*. Washington D.C.: Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2006. x, 104 p.

This volume is the second version, updated, of a first survey, conducted by the Pew Internet and the American Life Project, amongst a broad number of specialists, about forecasts on a forthcoming Internet. The survey, conducted between November 2005 and April 2006, was sent on line to 742 stakeholders –specialists in technologies, journalists, the global industry, public institutions and foundations, even futurologists. The team responsible for the project designed seven possible scenarios for 2020. Respondents should specify their degree of agreement and/or disagreement, as well as comment their reasons for the answer.

Scenarios were: (a) a global and low-cost network; (b) displacement of other languages by English; (c) a highly autonomous technology; (d) transparency versus privacy; (e) adiction to virtual worlds; (f) a generalized access to success; (g) a terrorist rejection of technology. These scenarios, nevertheless, simply gave cause for brainstorming and reflection. Quantitative results showed a fifty-fifty level of agreement with these futuristic scenarios.

The final report not only compiles quantitative data, but also deploys a broad selection of comments by its respondents. These comments show a not too uniform quality, and they range from a wholehearted support to technologies, to a notion of their associated risks, particularly surveillance and social exclusion.

The report is unequal in nature: it was born, not in order to conduct a formalized survey, but, rather, in order to trigger creative thinking, not always as fortunate as desirable, but always suggestive and illuminating.

Curiously, main researchers in the project do not consider worthwhile the point of view provided by archival science. This author has not been able to find, as respondents, archivists, either researchers or practitioners; although he has found some librarians and specialists in librarianship, as well as researchers in information science. However,

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recordkeeping, particularly related to privacy, surveillance and transparency, often is explicitly or implicitly discussed, but not by archivists. Should we think that we are missing our shot, since we are perceived by other professionals as “not being stakeholders” in web environments? And, if so, where are we missing with our shot, and how should we adjust our course?

Alejandro Delgado Gómez