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Do we live an information society? Does it matter?

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Abstract

It has become common for more than a decade to allude to Japan, North America, Western Europe and those of us who live in an advanced society as information societies. The term information society is for a society in which the creations, distribution, use, dispersal, integration, and management of information has become the most significant cultural, economic, and political activity. The goal of the information society is to achieve competitive advantages globally, through using IT in a creative and useful way. People who have the means to participate in this form of society are called digital citizen. It is true that there is much more information around than before, as can be seen in the explosion of media channels and products, the accelerating computerization of societies, development in education, and the increase of information-related occupations. Because of such developments, it is not unexpected that our age is being described as information society.

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Introduction

It has become common for more than a decade to allude to Japan, North America, Western Europe and those of us who live in advanced society as information societies. The claim that this is so comes generally from educationalists, politicians and industrialists, each of whom have concerns about how best to compete in this information age. It is basically part of accepted vocabulary of opinion leaders who at present comment on the state of the world. Japan has embraced the concept of information society in the early 1970. (Duff, 2000) The vision of information society seems to be mainly accepted as the societies of the future throughout Western Europe, where many states have tried to develop policy for encourage the transformation. (Benedetti, 1980; Snow, 1985) There have been similar movements in Brazil (Bronco, 1982), Canada (Ganley, 1984), Australia (Cullen, 1985).

Both developed and developing countries try to take advantage of the recognized benefits of the Information Revolution.

The term information society is a term for a society in which the creations, distribution, use, dispersal, integration, and management of information has become the most significant cultural, economic, and political activity. The goal of the information society is to achieve competitive advantage globally, through using IT in a creative and useful way. People who have the means to participate in this form of society are called digital citizen.

Each generation comes to believe that its own times are volatile; however something extraordinary appears to be happening in our age. Ideas such as information society give us means to identify and start to understand the world we live in. It is true that There is much more information around than before, as can be seen in the explosion of media channels and products, the accelerating computerization of societies, development in education, and the increase

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of information-related occupations. Because of such developments, it is not unexpected that our age is being described as information society.

The characteristics of information societies

Information societies have three main characteristics. First, information is used as an economic resource. Organizations use information to enhance their effectiveness, to stimulate innovation and to increase efficiency and competitive position, regularly through enhancements in the quality of the services and goods they manufacture.

Secondly, it is possible to see greater use of information among the general public. People use information more in their activities as users: to inform their options between various products, to control their own lives better and also to explore their entitlements to public services.

The third characteristic of information societies is the progress of an information sector within the economy. The purpose of the information sector is to please the common demand for information services and facilities. An important part of the sector is associated with technological infrastructure: The networks of telecommunications and computers. However, the need is being recognized as well to develop the industry generation the information that flows around the networks: the information-content providers.

The creation of individual information societies is happening within a greater, international procedure of change. To some extent this is because the developing information systems are worldwide. Both developed and developing countries are transformed into information societies. Generally most of them are concerned to use information to make their relative competitiveness better or somewhat, to keep their position in an increasingly aggressive global marketing.

Distinction of an information society

Six main distinctions have been put forward to characterize an information society: technological, economic, spatial, occupational, cultural and manual Castell's theory in nutshell. (Webster, 2002)

Technological

New technologies are one of the most obvious indicators of new times, therefore, are commonly taken to signal of an information society. It is apparent that from the technological point of view we live in an information society since information play a continually developing role in all fields of social existence, which has shaken the basis of social form and resulted in great changes in economy, politics, culture, and everyday life. The fast growth of

internet, particularly, the information superhighway, and the spread of national, international information networks has always been held as a key development. Two periods can be identified that during which the claim was made that new technologies were believed to be bringing about systemic social change. During the first, the late 1970s, and early 1980s, observers got excited about the mighty micro's capacity to revolutionize the way of our life. (Evans, 1979) the world has been certainly shaped by three waves of technological innovation. The first was the agricultural revolution; the second was the industrial revolution. The third is the information revolution

Economical

Economy-based approaches track the growth in economic value of information –related activities. As business information continues to grow as a proportion of gross national product, it will get to a point where the achievement of information society can be declared. Although, it can be true in theory but in practice measuring information activities is extremely complicated.

Occupational

Occupational change is generally taken as another indicator of an information society. Arguments here are based on the assumption that if most works involve information so we have reached an information society. The decline of manufacturing or industrial employment and the increase of service sector employment are taken as further signals of change. The raw material of non-manual labour is information so; important rise in such informational work can be believed to announce the arrival of an information society.

Spatial

As the spatial scholars see it we live in information society because through the application of the information technologies and globalization physical space looks to lose its determining performs. Here the main emphasis is on how information networks link locations, and consequently can have a deep impact on the organization of time and space. It has become particularly popular index of the information society in last a few years as information networks have become remarkable features of social organization. They inform predictions of a wired society, operating at national, international and global levels, in each home, shop, university, office. A popular notion is that this will result in new flows of information, changing space/time relations, removing the restriction of the clock and of the distance.

Cultural

This distinction is clearly more heavily information-laden than any previous one. We live in a media-saturated environment and life has become more about symbolization, about receiving and exchanging messages about ourselves and others. This is acknowledgement of this explosion of messages that has taken to mean we have entered an information society, in which what we do and see is simulated.

Manual Castell's theory in nutshell

It is not simply that there is more information, but there is the way we use knowledge and information are changing and growing in importance. Castell discusses that the information society is the new mode of human existence, in which the preparation, recording, processing, and the retrieving of information in organized networks play the main role. Castell discusses that it is accepted to point an anew created mode of shared existence, if quantitative changes result in qualitative changes with respect to social interaction. The newness of a society cannot be established entirely by our obtaining of new goods or phenomena such as the dotcom companies bubble in the economy. It is not this that means the recurrence of the economy; this is clearly the old system collecting some new participants. Where we see the regeneration of prior processes through the making of new expectation, which transform the accustomed logic of social interaction then we can claim a change. This basic change which creates information society is actually the transformation of the structure of the society. (Castell, 1998)

Do we live in an information society? Does it matter?

We live in an information society. There can be no doubt that there is much more information available than ever before. But if there is only more information, it is not easy to suggest why the information society is something completely new. All societies can be called information society in so far as they all even pre-internet societies have had routines and procedures and means to gather, store, and control about people. So, more information can not itself be supposed as a break with previous social systems.

Information plays a significant role in the way we live. There is clearly more education available, more media output, more information and more communication technologies about, and more information occupation than before. But one of the foundations of the information society is defined as a means that allows us to share information to connect and communicate as international community.

(Mackay, 2001) So the technological change alone does not create the information society, it forms only a part of the groundwork essential to build such a society. Also, it is not the quantity of information or the way in which people relate to information that makes an information society. Rather, it is the way in which information is disseminated. More specifically, rather than the way that a person might relate to information, the way in which an entire society may interact with information has created the information revolution, which brought about the information society.

Almost most of the tools essential to turn into a member of information society have been in progress since before Information Revolution. The making of this have been in wide use since the Industrial Revolution. Universal education prepared all members to access education and information, with the democratic purpose of allowing all individuals equal access to information. Stonier (1983) in his book 'focusing on the information society' notes that an educated workforce tends to take advantage of new technology, while an ignorant one tends to be victimized by it.

Therefore, it cannot be the way in which members of society interact with information that has created an information society, since the potential for broad access to information has existed in numerous countries for more than a century. The combination of technological innovation with universal education and the ability of all members of society to access these technologies and to make a great use of them have created an information revolution. It is the society that this revolution has created that can be termed an information society.

Advantages

One of the most lasting advantages of the information society, and one of the main possible areas for its growth, is in the area of democracy. Since the information society is mainly concerned with the spread of information and news, the people of democracy is likely to much more aware, up to date, engaged and therefore active in the political process. Society has constantly been drawn towards various sources of information; due to some time and space obstacles, getting to this information has sometimes proved to be frightening work. That has resulted into high cost of transportation a backlog of procedures. Now, with highly network system, one needs not to leave their home. Information can travel through networks connecting people together. Growth in information sharing, as a consequence decrease the time and cost of access, moreover supply great benefits to the environment by the fundamental reduction in paper use.

Without the information society and the technological improvement which allow it, numerous of the progresses and improvement outside of the developed world would never have been able to happen. As an alternative, the developments that have been achieved by the information society would have been reserved for those already gifted with technological, educational and economic wealth.

Information society and its worldwide nature have made it possible for many isolated societies to share in the collaborative and educational benefits of the technological improvements such as the internet. Without the creation of a quasi-global information society, the technological advancements that led to the information society would never have become identified as an information revolution, and rather would have remained technological improvements, but not revolutionary in terms of societal or personal advancement.

Disadvantage

In information society, individuals are more informed that ever before because they are given the chance to access countless amounts of data. The huge amounts of information that surround us daily, hold us superficially and not considerably aware of reality. We in some way turn out to be distant to what is going on as we feel it is not near us, and fundamentally, it does not really have an effect on us. It might even make us insensitive towards what we see, because it can be felt that tragedies and disaster are all over and learn to have a mental block to them, not to be influenced by them in any way.

The information overload can sometimes confuse and devastate the user, and consequently may act as a prevention or obstruction to the acquisition of material. The mass of information on a daily basis accumulated in the electronic routes is so large that soon we will be talking about 'network traffic'.

The change achieved by information infrastructure in industrial and business can result in losing jobs in traditional areas and lack of workers in emerging area. In Telework, paid work as we know it today will be significantly decreased as most jobs on hand shall be on a part-time base, in the sense that the completion of work will be necessary under certain specifications and a certain time. The employer's demands in skills and knowledge will raise the same way that the demands for working with new technologies.

The protection of our privacy is another tremendously vital issue that required to be considered. Through the information society, an overload of negative data can turn into a devastating social factor if it is used without any control. The

dispersal of illegal and unsafe content in different networks, child prostitution, electronic fraud, and also other related delinquent activities have been transferred from the streets to our computers.

Conclusion

'Information society' is a term used to describe the most current stage of social history. In the 20th century the most developed countries steadily entered the state of information society and it is anticipated that in a few decades the most of the world's populace will be living in a global information society. Information society has transformed different facets of our life such as the field of education, business, and communication. The impacts of information society are deep. There are greater benefits through information society rather than drawbacks to individuals and society alike.

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