

"The Orbital Age"

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The most significant development in the field of information technologies within recent years has been the merger of three hitherto relatively independent types of technology. Information transfer, information reproduction, and information processing have been merged into a single technology. This merger does not only result in global compound systems and networks, but also in the mass production of information comparable to the industrial production of the past century. This mass production entails a whole series of consequences rendering the established systems of education and the contents of education obsolete. At the same time, the fact that information and knowledge are becoming a merchandise will bring about essential changes. Such developments can, in fact, be discerned in view of recent trends at American universities. From these developments it may be concluded that before long present universities will change to such a degree that it will be difficult to distinguish them from multinational companies. The nature of these changes and their consequences are to be dealt with in this paper. The considerable loss of reality awareness caused by these changes will be pointed out.

We must also expect the difference between working and learning to become obsolete. In the future, the problem of unemployment may be solved by compulsory and rewarded training programs. This does not necessarily imply that we shall achieve a higher level of education.

The paper also refers to developments constituting possible reactions and alternatives to the situation depicted. Body building – sensitivity training – or the mounting interest in traditional forms of knowledge and modes of production might be taken to indicate contrary trends.