

# Knowledge 2.0

Worst. Title. Ever.

David Weinberger Ph.D.

Harvard Berkman Center

Self @ evident . com

NDU

Sept. 19, 2008

What was Web 1.0?



At the pinnacle of our culture is knowledge. We are know-ers. We have an idea about how it works.



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### Web 1.0

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publishing -->

### Web 2.0

Google AdSense

Flickr

BitTorrent

Napster

Wikipedia

blogging

upcoming.org and EVDB

search engine optimization

cost per click

web services

participation

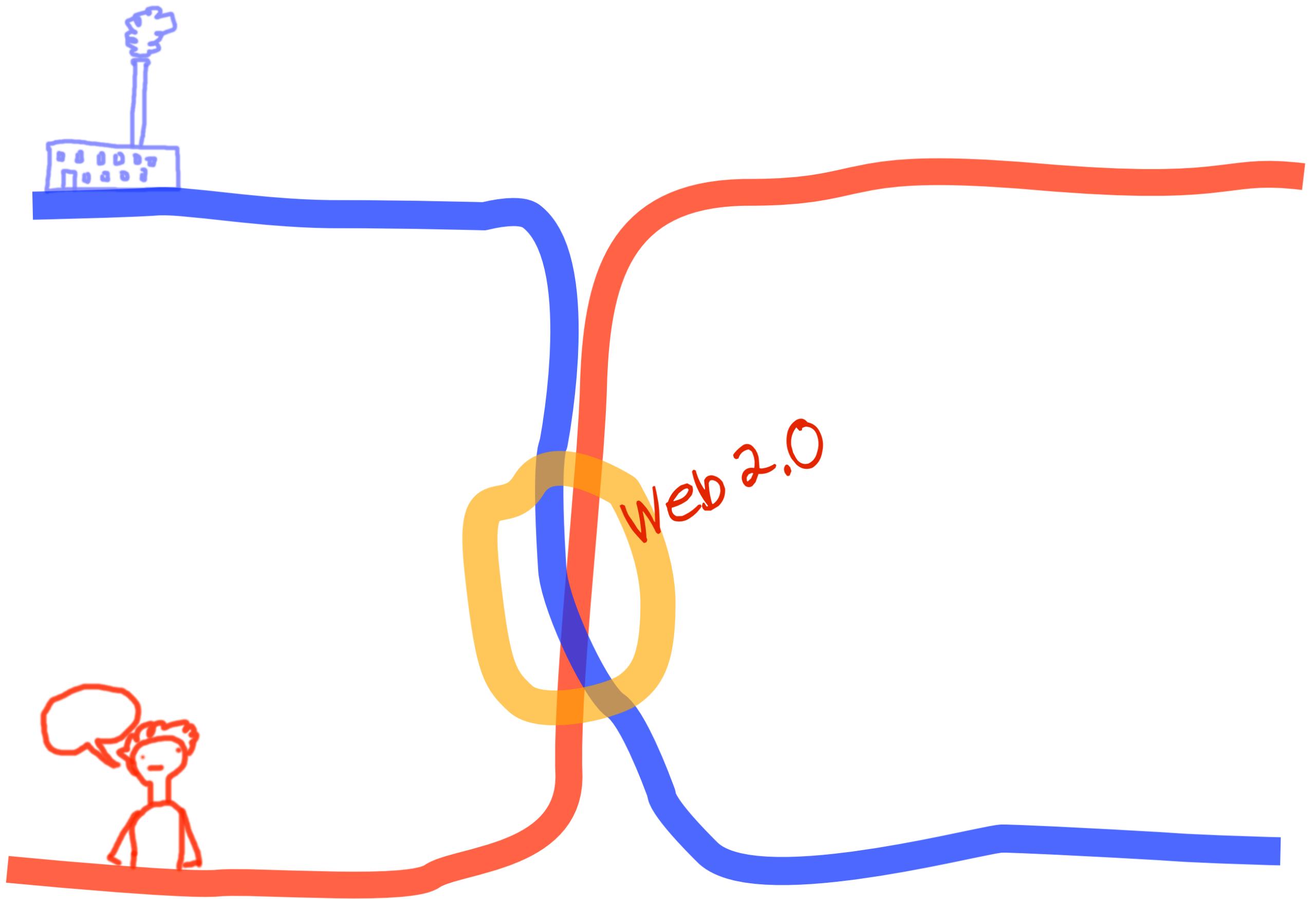
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Web 2.0 was formulated by Tim O'Reilly, the publisher. They were looking at a set of changes on the Web and thought there was enough of a difference in the Web then and now to give it a new revision number. They also thought they saw a pattern to the changes. Not a lot of clarity about the pattern. But...three facets: More app-to-app integration. The network effect -- things that happen when you have lots of people connected -- and users generating content instead of relying on commercial content.



My only problem with Web 2.0 is that it reinforces the early and wrong view of the Web. That before Web 2.0, users had no voice. That's how the media covered the Web early on, but it wasn't true. You can only explain the incredibly rapid growth of the Web by saying that we weren't there simply to shop in catalogs or read CNN online. We were there because we go to talk in our own voice about what mattered to us.



We have consistently diminished the Web by inevitably assimilating it to the familiar, e.g., “information highway”



or libraries- But we can't explain the enthusiasm and the hope the Internet inspires by thinking that in the mid 1990s suddenly the earth was filled with people who decided they wanted to become information researchers. No, the metaphors lead us astray:



We drive highways to get somewhere else, but the Internet for many is the destination.



And there are of course libraries of books online, but books themselves are poor metaphors for the Web. Two of the founding events of our culture occurred with the ability to make content persistent and public. Now with the Web, we are able to make the relationships among content persistent and public. The Web is important precisely in how it violates the nature of a library and of books.

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We are really confused by the Web. Deeply confused. For example, there's been a debate that's gone on for over ten years. One side looks at the web and sees diversity -- a dance of difference. So many points of view!



duesentrieb@flickr

And the other side sees bunkers, echo chambers, people only talking with people like themselves, becoming more hardened in their views.



This the Internet Rohrschach test. People looking at exactly the same thing and seeing something radically different. Angels flying a statue away? Pelvis?

Vary by  
age, race,  
country,  
topic?

Compared to what?  
Diversity in op-eds? White  
guy evening news?

Beyond links  
topology, what are  
our actual habits?

How  
does info  
actually  
flow?

How  
do we talk  
off line? How  
should we

This is because the Web is so different. We don't have information. We don't know what to compare it to. And we have an idealized view of how our culture actually works.

# Knowing our world



So, I want to look at one particular idea this morning, to try to see some of the differences. I want to talk about knowledge because it's the pinnacle of our culture is knowledge. We are know-ers. And because a change in knowledge brings about a change in authority and the institutions of authority.

A photograph of a rugged, layered rock formation, likely a cliff face or mountain peak, with sparse vegetation. The rock is reddish-brown and shows distinct horizontal strata. The foreground is filled with green and yellowish shrubs. The sky is overcast and grey. The text "One Knowledge" is overlaid in a bold, red, stylized font across the upper part of the image.

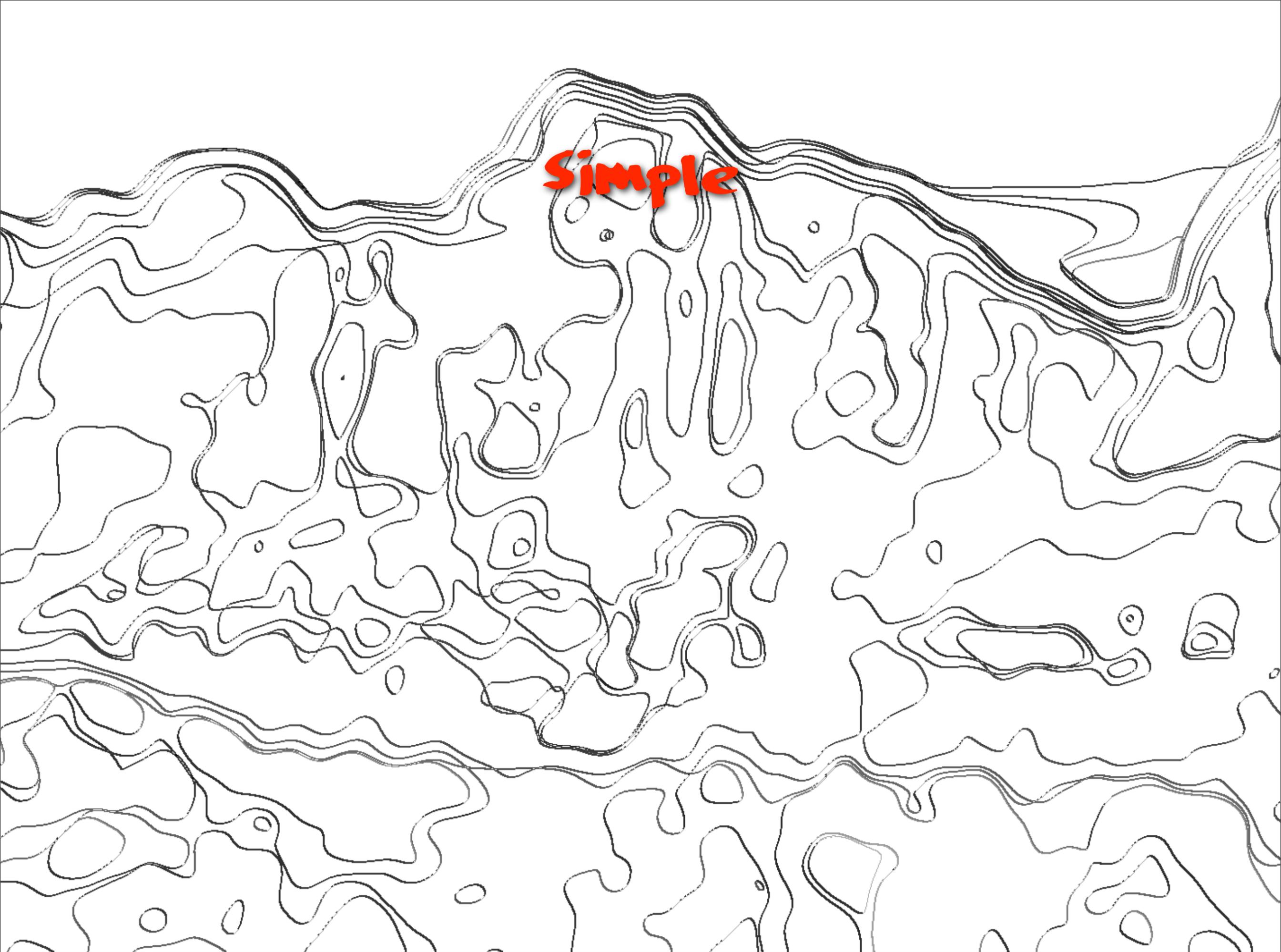
# One Knowledge

Thus, there is only one knowledge, because the world is one way and not another.



*Same for everyone*

Knowledge is the same for everyone, just as reality is.

A complex topographic map with many contour lines, showing a highly irregular and detailed terrain. The word "Simple" is overlaid in red, bold, sans-serif font in the upper-middle section of the map.

**Simple**

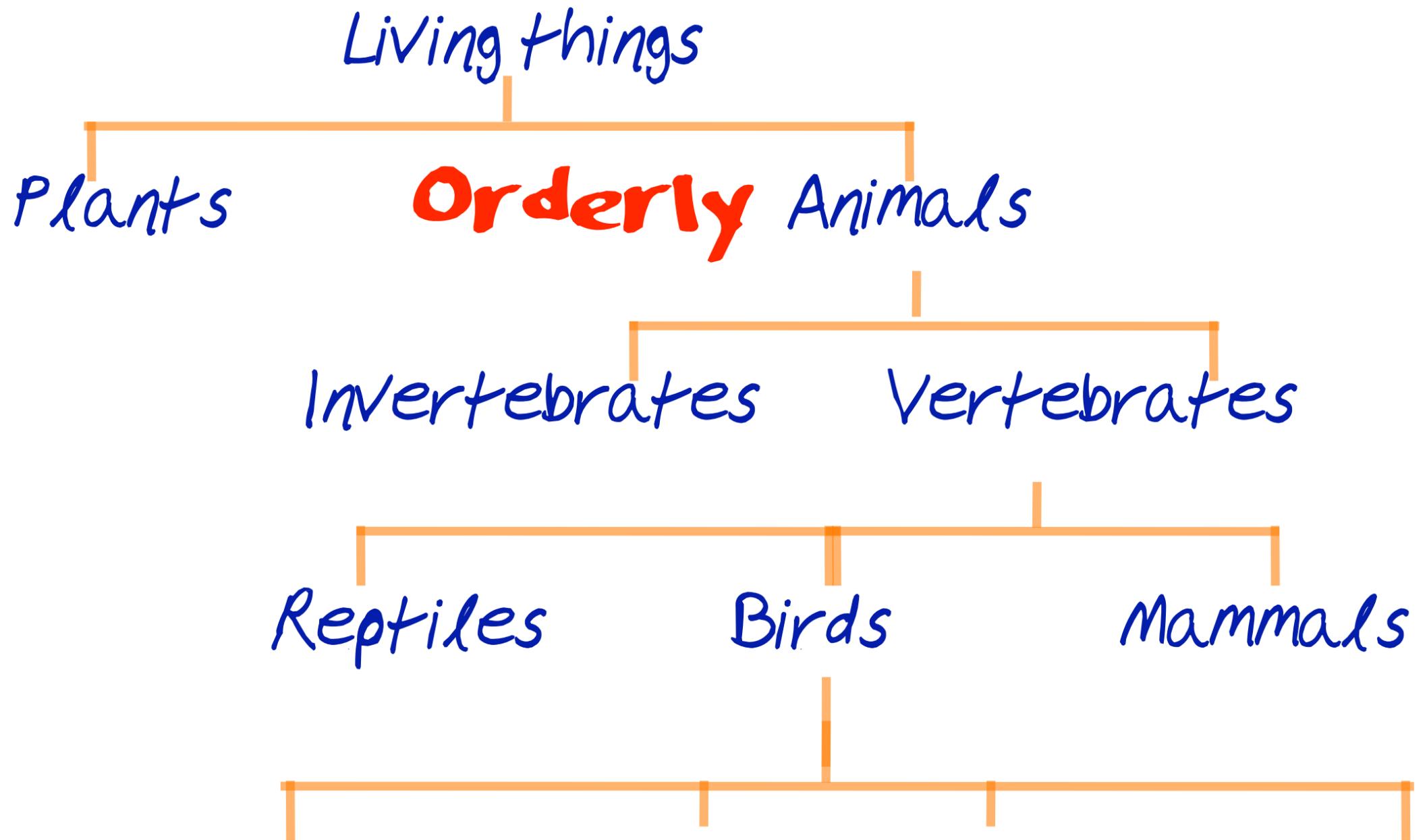
Thus, there is only one knowledge, because the world is one way and not another.



**Settled**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/98469445@N00/327471676/>

Once it's known, it's known. Done.  
Settled.



Knowledge is an orderly system.

# Scarce



*mcmrbt@flickr*

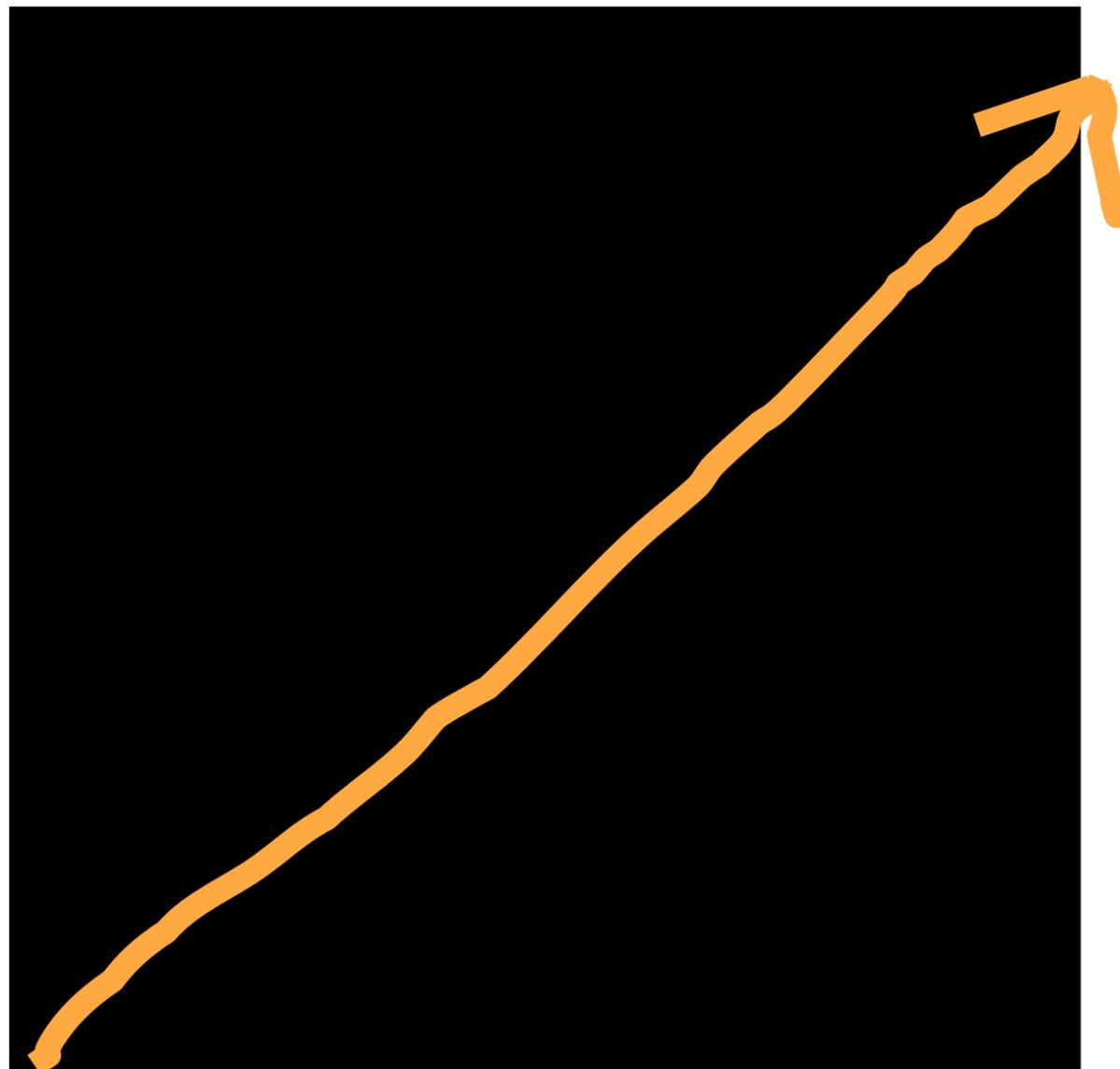
Knowledge is scarce. Not everything gets to be knowledge.



It may be scarce, but it's a lot of scarcity, so to speak. We have a set of institutions/mechanisms for dealing with this abundance of the scarce. Library of congress. 7000 books a day

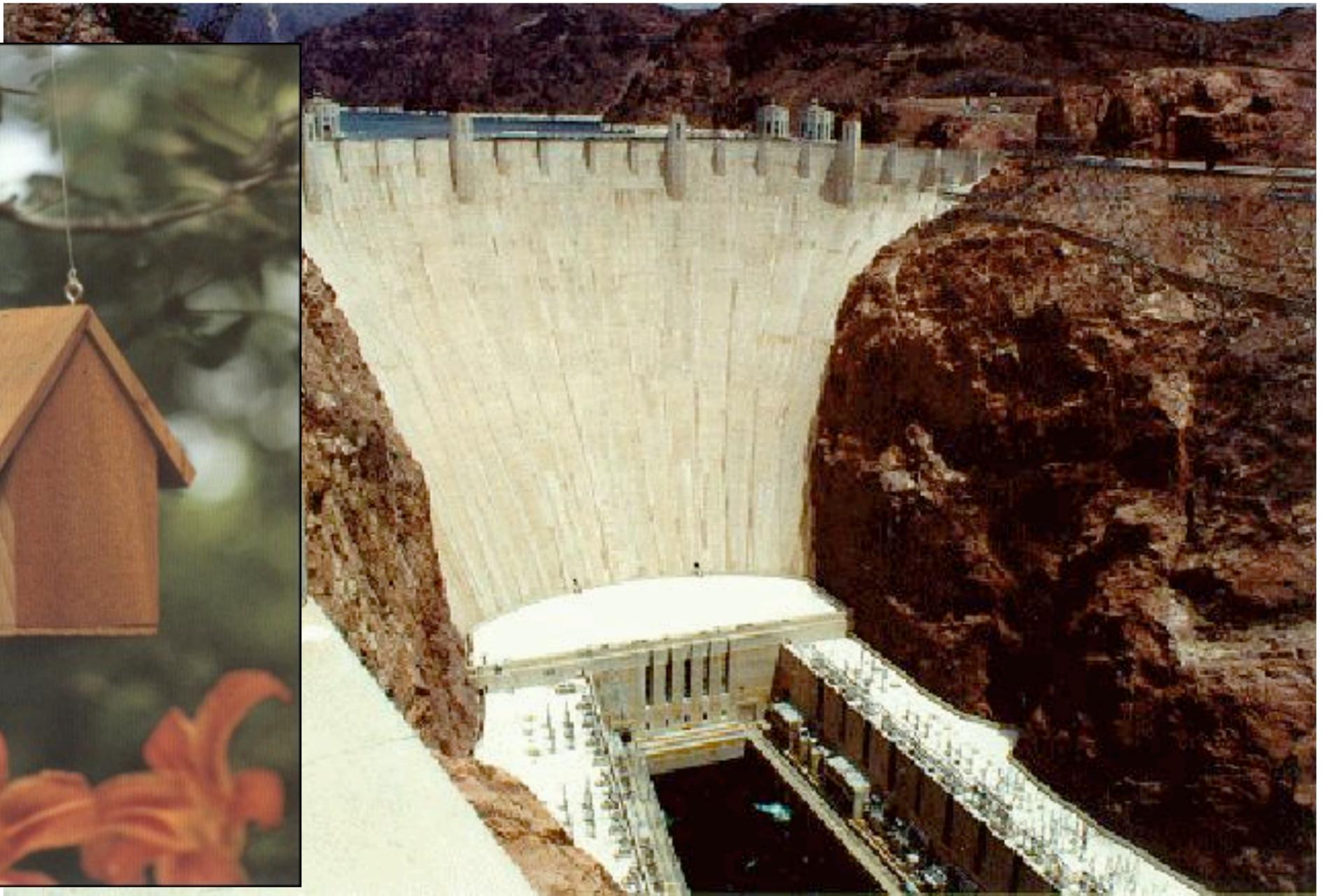


*control*



*size*

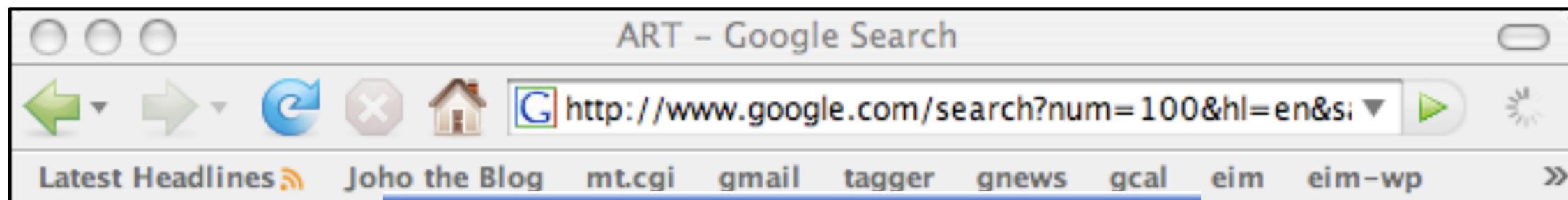
Behind these institutions is a very old assumption. The bigger the project, the more control you need.



If you are doing a small project, you only need a sketch drawn on the back of an envelope. Bigger projects need more control and management.



Then we come to the Web. The most complex network ever. Scalable beyond belief. And how many managers did it take to build it? None. It was designed to get managers out of the process. That's the only reason it could grow so big so fast. It's the only reason the Internet has spurred the most innovative period in human history. But that also means that for better or worse, it is a permission free zone. Govts have tended to focus on the worse. We need to keep in mind the better as well.



708 196,000,000 for EXPERTS HING



But, because not control, we get more of everything



We're in an age of abundance. we get an abundance of good and an abundance of bad. Wve tended to focus on how to protect citizens from the bad, but if an abundance of crap is worrying, abundance of good is terrifying.

Control  
doesn't scale

because Control doesn't scale, at least not without a lot of loss -- of information, of social connection.

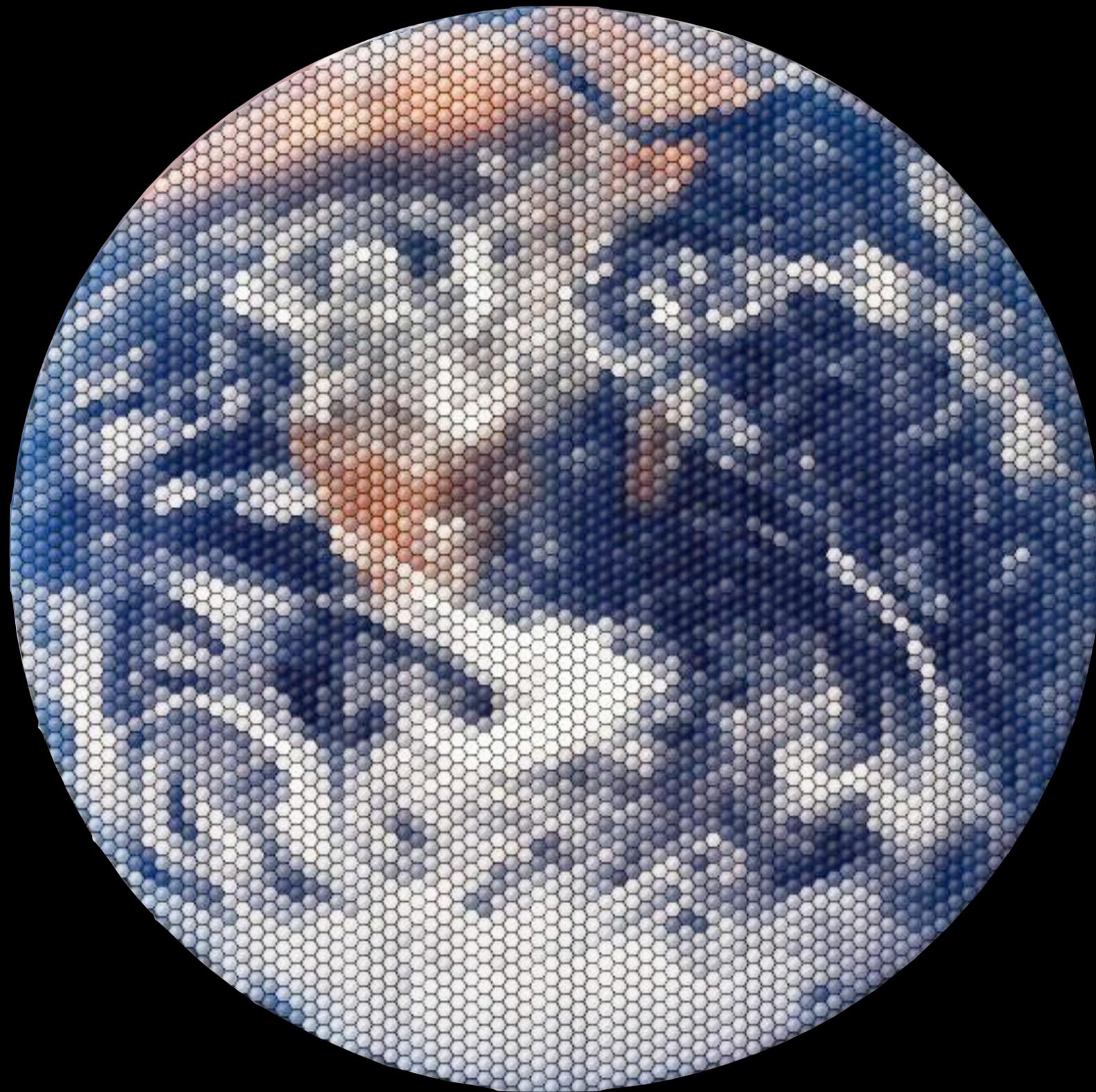
# The real's nefarious purpose:



But reality forces us to arrange things one way instead of another. Including knowledge, which we communicate and preserve through physical means. everything has to go somewhere.



No matter how hard we  
try

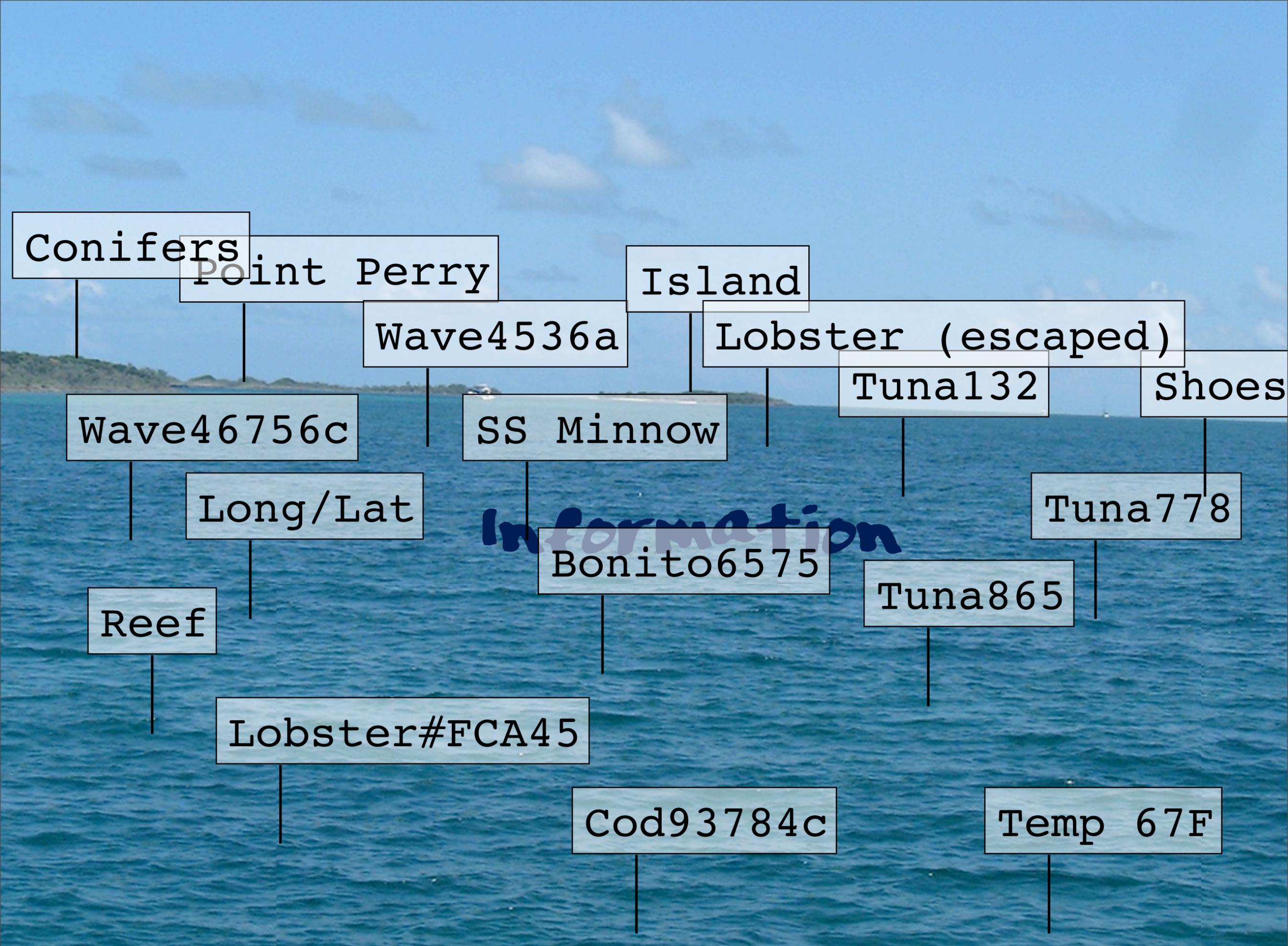


But now we're digitizing everything. Just about everything.

# *New principles of organization*



Freed from the physical, we have to invent new principles of organization



We're supposed to be overwhelmed by now. Predictions of info overload. But it turns out the solution to their info overload problem is to generate more information, metadata, information about the information. That's what we've been doing, but metadata is changing



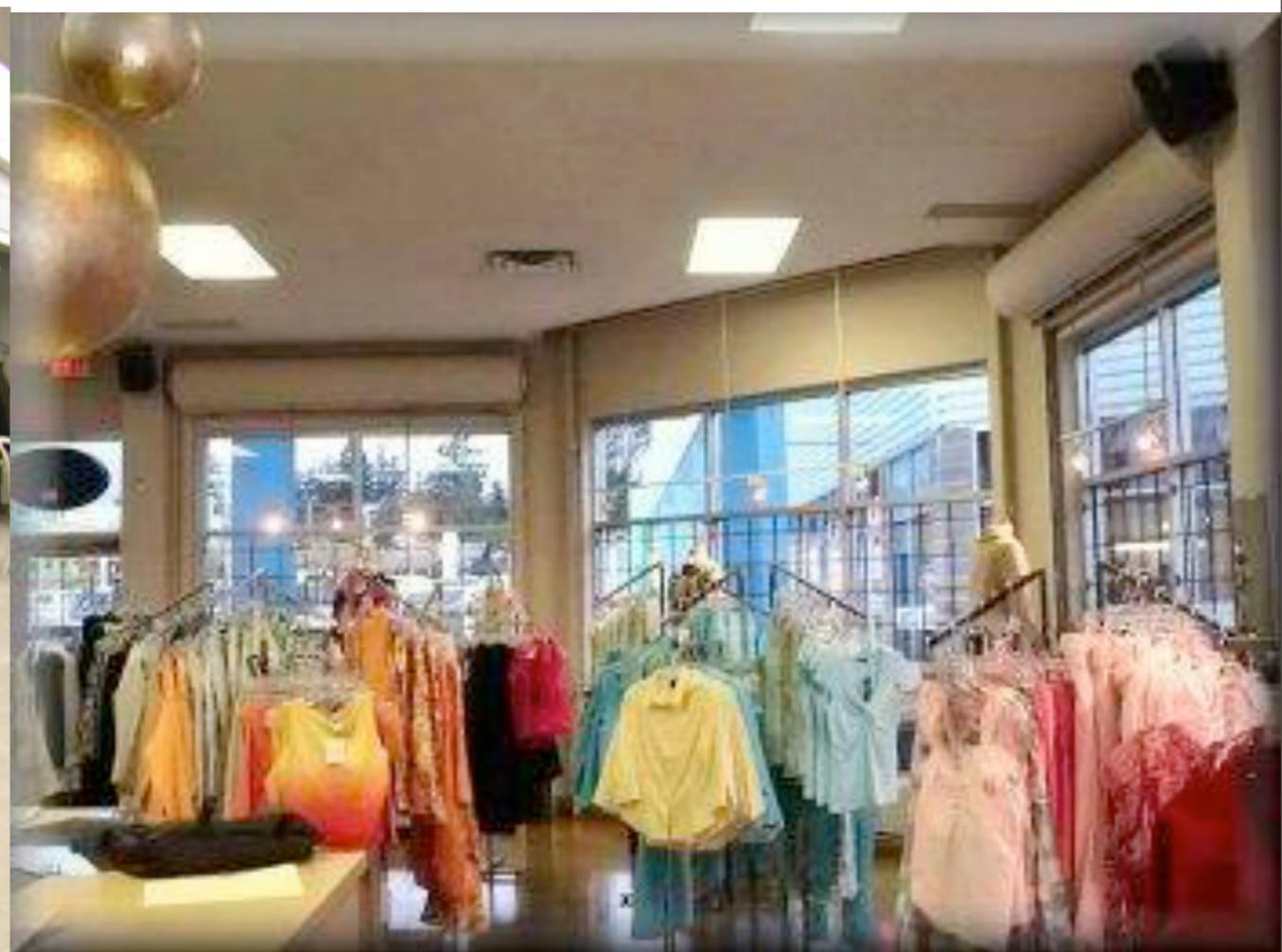
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But the nature of metadata is changing . We are used to the idea that there's a difference between data and metadata.





Metadata has always been the lever by which we pry up knowledge, now everything is a lever. We just got smarter as a species.



Because we're just dealing with metadata, the old rule that the owners of the stuff also control the organization of the stuff doesn't hold.

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Woman aircraft worker, Vega Aircraft Corporation, Burbank, Calif. Shown checking assemblies

1942 June

1 transparency : color.

**Notes:**  
Title from FSA or OWI agency caption.  
Transfer from U.S. Office of War Information, 1944.

**Subjects:**  
Vega Aircraft Corporation  
Airplane industry  
Women--Employment  
World War, 1939-1945  
United States--California--Burbank

**Format:** Transparencies--Color

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**Persistent URL:** [hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsac.1a34455](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsac.1a34455)

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Bransby, David,, photographer.

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june  
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factory  
Vega  
Aircraft  
war time  
gloves  
cables  
Bransby, David  
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coiff  
assembly  
color  
glove  
brunette  
Burbank  
coil  
electrical  
employed  
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AirRover Company  
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Search

1,615 photos

or pilot

Here's an example. The library of congress recently posted 3,000 photos from its collection at flickr because taxonomists can't keep up, it unleashed the abundance. They post the official metadata, but people contribute unexpected tags. They annotate the photo itself and conversations happen there.



[From Afghanistan With Love](#) pro says:

wonderful.. would there be room for more tags, i would have added "workforce"

Posted 2 weeks ago. ( [permalink](#) )



[Creature Comforts](#) pro says:

my tag would have been armband.

Posted 2 weeks ago. ( [permalink](#) )



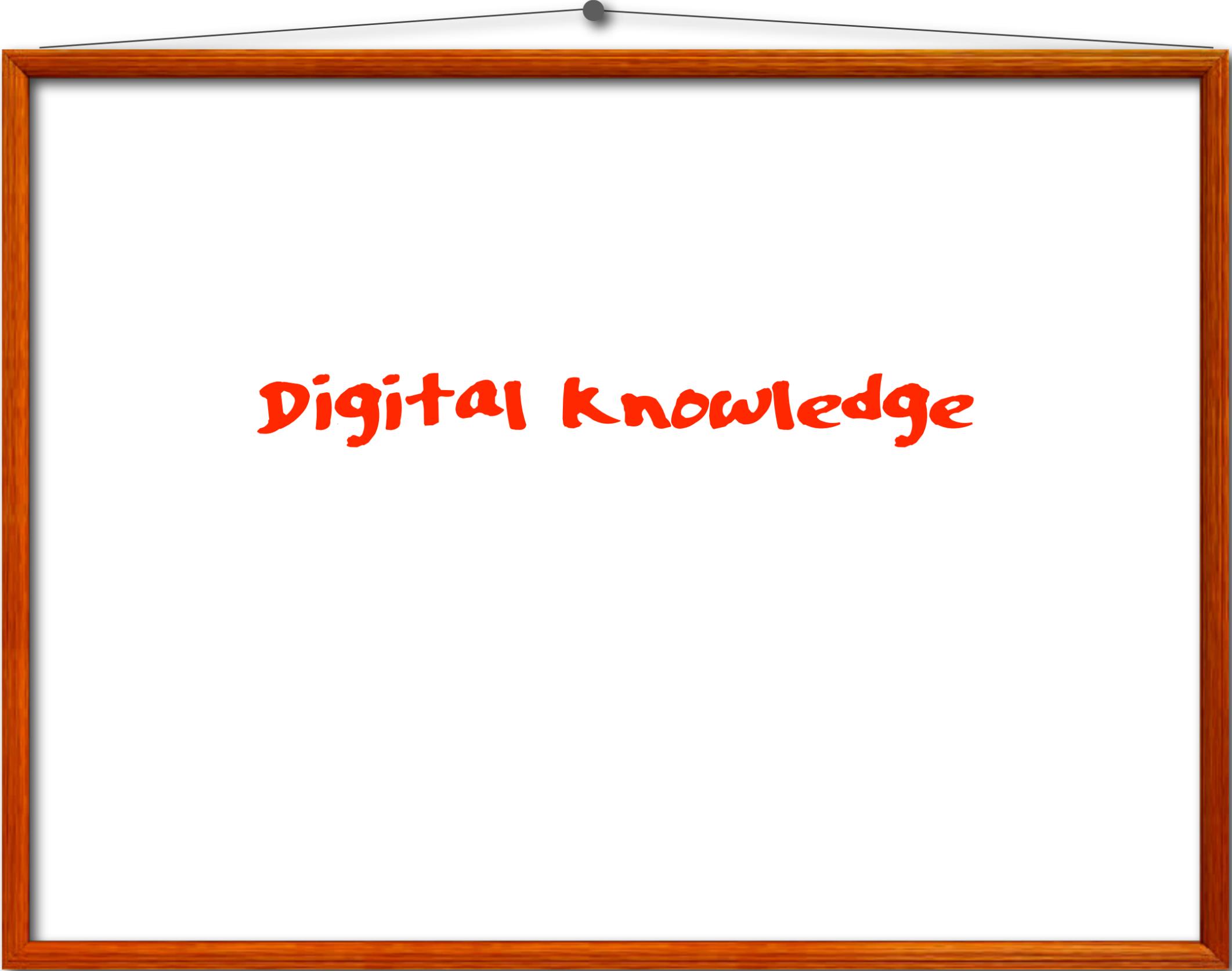
[~Terrie K~](#) pro says:

Wonderful picture that captures the era. Color and detail are fabulous.

I tried to add a tag Kodachrome but there is a 75 limit.

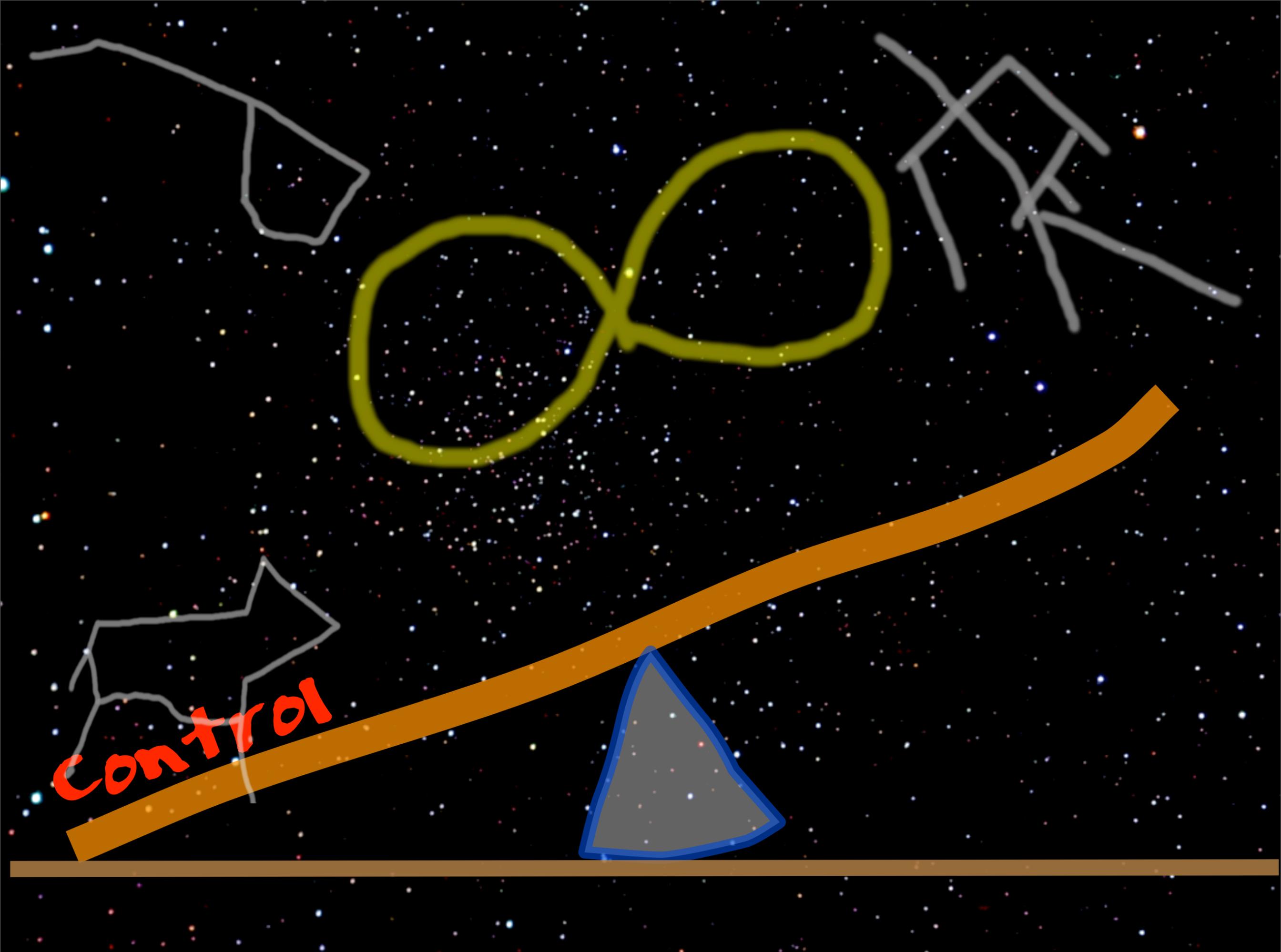
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Discussion springs up. Back and forth. Variety of topics. LC jumps in. This is what's happened to the neat world of information, carefully arranged, in one place at a time. Mess but useful. Enabling mess enables info to be added and found.



*Digital Knowledge*

this has consequences...



Now we get to see what happens to knowledge when control goes down, metadata goes up, and we have infinite space, and infinite connection

Ecosystem

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## Gateways and databases

Asia gateway

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→ **Current Issue**  
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### [Post-doctoral Scientist](#)

The Hutchison / MRC  
Cambridge United Kingdom

### [Expert for Bioinformatics](#)

**Complexity**

The lack of control manifests itself as complexity



So when pres Bush gave a talk on immigration two years ago, his advisers undoubtedly told him to keep it simple. So, he and his speechwriters did.



# The White House

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

President \* News \* Vice President \* History & Tours \* First Lady \* Mrs. Cheney

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May 15, 2006

## President Bush Addresses the Nation on Immigration Reform

The Oval Office

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- [Fact Sheet: Overview: Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#)

Reform

- [In Focus: Immigration](#)
- [en Español](#)



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President's Remarks

[view](#)

8:01 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. I've asked for a few minutes of your time to discuss a matter of national importance — the reform of America's immigration system.

The issue of immigration stirs intense emotions, and in recent weeks, Americans have seen those emotions on display. On the streets of major cities, crowds have rallied in support of those in our country illegally. At our southern border, others have organized to stop illegal immigrants from coming in. Across the country, Americans are trying to reconcile these contrasting images. And in Washington, the debate over immigration reform has reached a time of decision. Tonight, I will make it clear where I stand, and where I want to lead our country on this vital issue.



Knowledge is messy and unsettled



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Never done because it doesn't have to be. Finishing just means you'll be wrong faster.

*Loosely ordered*

The organization of it is loose at  
best



We divide knowledge into topics because books demand it because they're physical. But that severing removes information.

# "Philosophy" as a topic

Britannica

Wikipedia

## Medieval philosophy

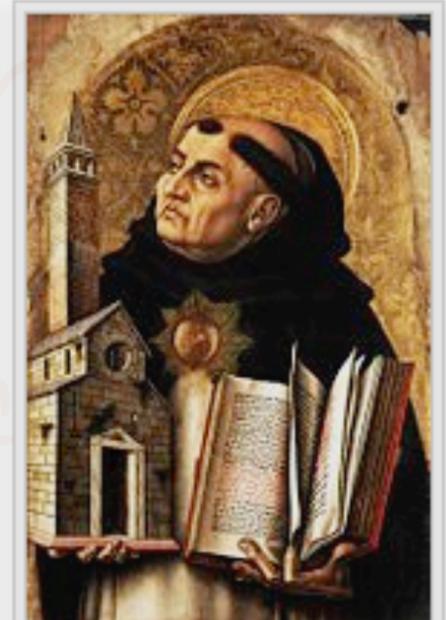
[edit]

Main article: [Medieval philosophy](#)

Medieval philosophy is the philosophy of [Western Europe](#) and the [Middle East](#) during what is now known as the [medieval](#) era or the [Middle Ages](#), roughly extending from the fall of the [Roman Empire](#) to the [Renaissance](#). Medieval philosophy is defined partly by the rediscovery and further development of classical [Greek](#) and [Hellenistic philosophy](#), and partly by the need to address theological problems and to integrate sacred doctrine (in [Islam](#), [Judaism](#) and [Christianity](#)) with [secular](#) learning.

Some problems discussed throughout this period are the relation of [faith](#) to [reason](#), the existence and unity of [God](#), the object of [theology](#) and [metaphysics](#), the problems of knowledge, of universals, and of individuation.

Philosophers from the Middle Ages include the Muslim philosophers [Alkindus](#), [Alfarabi](#), [Alhazen](#), [Avicenna](#), [Algazel](#), [Avempace](#), [Abubacer](#) and [Averroes](#); the Jewish philosophers [Maimonides](#) and [Gersonides](#); and the Christian philosophers [Anselm](#), [Peter Abelard](#), [Roger Bacon](#), [Thomas Aquinas](#), [Duns Scotus](#), [William of Ockham](#) and [Jean Buridan](#).



[St. Thomas Aquinas](#)



# Social knowing

That work of interlinking could only have been done together, socially. Knowledge is itself becoming social. We see this everywhere...

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There's way too much for any one person. So we're putting together knowledge

125 of 127 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Worth inheriting**, November 16, 2004

By [E. A Solinas "ea\\_solinas"](#)  (MD USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 10 REVIEWER

REAL NAME™

VINE™ VOICE

If "Little Women" is the novel wrapped around Jo March, then "The Inheritance" is her sister Beth -- small and unnoticed, but sweet and beautiful all the same. This lovely period TV movie is (very loosely) based on the mediocre novel of the same name, by the classic author Louisa May Alcott, and this is one of the few instances where the movie is vastly better than the book.

Edith Adelon (Cari Shayne) has lived with the wealthy Hamilton family ever since she was a baby, and is now the companion of bookish Amy (Brigitta Dau), and a good horsewoman to boot. But her life changes with the arrival of two guests at the Hamiltons' home: the beautiful, calculating Ida (Brigid Conley Walsh) and handsome James Percy (Thomas Gibson).

James and Edith are drawn together first as friends, and then by something deeper. But Ida, who wants him for herself, manipulates Edith into rejecting James when he proposes to her. Then after Edith takes place in a famed horse race, mysterious thefts and a family tragedy threaten to derail her entire life with the Hamiltons.

Now, think about what this will mean to the next administration. We're going to have social networks of citizens. The government eventually is going to pay attention. But how do you listen to a conversation that has 3M people in it? theDailyKos. Reputation system. Or Amazon. - e government. Reputation system We don't have a name for those whose reps are good enough that they'll be listened to

**Authority  
and  
Fallibility**

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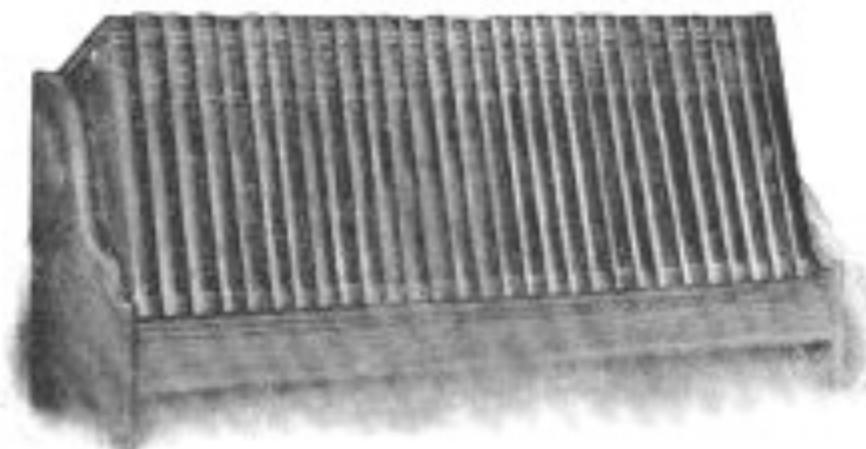
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## WHEN IN DOUBT—"LOOK IT UP" IN

The

# Encyclopaedia Britannica



(New 11th Edition) issued 1910-11 by the CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS (England)

## The Sum of Human Knowledge

*29 volumes, 28,150 pages, 44,000,000 words of text. Printed on thin, but strong opaque India paper, each volume but one inch in thickness.*

THE BOOK TO ASK QUESTIONS OF

FOR READING OR FOR STUDY

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FOR READING OR FOR STUDY

tion, with the slogan Encyclopædia

e on a topic; in the sources have displaced

Today the *Britannica* has evolved primarily into electronic versions available on CD-ROM and via the World Wide Web. It has survived fierce competition from an ever-increasing number of alternative information sources. The articles in the *Britannica* are commonly considered accurate, reliable, and well-written, and it continues to be widely consulted as a work of general reference.

### Contents [hide]

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- 3 Current version
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More about authority and credibility... Being in the Brit confers authority, but not being in Wikipedia. Yet Wikipedia is gaining authority. In what sense and to what effect?



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The  
Frida

[Kennedy](#) was [fatally wounded](#) by [gunshots](#) while riding in a presidential [motorcade](#) within [Dealey Plaza](#).

He was the fourth U.S. President to be [assassinated](#), and the eighth to die while in office.



To meet Wikipedia's [quality standards](#) and conform with our [NPOV policy](#), this article or section may require [cleanup](#).

**The current version of the article or section reads like a sermon.**

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ed as

## [3.1 The autopsy](#)

## [4 Reaction to the assassination](#)

## [5 Funeral](#)

## [6 Lee Harvey Oswald](#)

## [7 The Carcano rifle](#)

## [8 Recordings of the assassination](#)

## [9 Sealing of assassination records](#)

## [10 Official investigations](#)

### [10.1 Dallas Police](#)

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#### [10.2.1 The destruction of evidence](#)

### [10.3 The Warren Commission](#)

#### [10.3.1 Public response to the Warren Report](#)

### [10.4 The Ramsey Clark Panel](#)

### [10.5 The House Select Committee on Assassinations](#)

#### [10.5.1 Response to the Ditchelt Evidence](#)

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"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

Late Edition

New York: Today, mostly sunny and  
brisk, high 33. Tonight, clear, light  
frost, low 25. Tomorrow, partly  
cloudy, high 45. Wednesday, high 45,  
low 25. Weather map on page B6.

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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2004

\$4.00 (includes the premium Post-Net Sunday supplement)

\$3.00

## Regional Terrorist Groups Pose Growing Threat, Experts Warn

Inspired by Al Qaeda and More Difficult to Fight

By RICHARD BROWNE and DON TAYNATHAN

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Feb. 7 — The landscape of terrorism has a new shape, many intelligence officials around the world say, with more than a dozen regional militant Islamic groups stirring up an

aggressive war by the United States, officials said, by emboldening terrorist training camps in Kashmir, the Philippines and West Africa, filling the void left by the dismantling of Qaeda's camps in Afghanistan.



## KERRY VICTORIOUS BY WIDE MARGINS IN 2 MORE STATES

DENN IS A DISTANT SECOND

After Taking Washington  
and Michigan, Senator



The neutrality of this article is disputed.  
Please see the discussion on the talk page.

## Delicate Dance For Musharraf In Nuclear Case

By DAVID BROWNE  
and TALAT BUNYAN

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, Feb. 7 — Almost three years after he took power in October 2001, Gen. Pervez Musharraf found himself in a delicate dance with Saudi Arabia's King, the president of Pakistan's nuclear watchdog agency and the world's most powerful nuclear power around the world.

Gen. Pervez Musharraf is now seen by a broad-based Pakistani group to have possible targets for attacks. The group, Lashkar-e-Taiba, was previously thought to be focused only on the struggle of Muslims in Kashmir.

The activities of such organizations in one corner of the globe often reflect the global struggle against the United States and its allies remains high. But the military and nuclear ambitions of the groups, some of which have operated before the Sept. 11 attacks, make it difficult to agree on a common strategy or follow that strategy.

"They are the only ones who have taken back into the world," said Gen. Musharraf, on Feb. 7, after the director of counterterrorism at the United States Central Intelligence Agency said in



Views in Seattle about conditions yesterday in the Washington State caucuses, where 70 delegates were at stake. Democrats also held caucuses in Michigan, the biggest recruiting contest so far with 125 delegates.

## In Senate, Kerry Focused on Inquiries, Not Bills

By DAVID E. BONENBAIN  
and KENNETH TOMER

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7 — The other senator secured the job. His closest opponent said he was making specific

of Mr. Bush.

## Vietnam P.O.W.'s Issue, a Banking Scandal and Mostly Liberal Votes

John McCain of Arizona, Mr. Bush

opponents." Mr. Kerry said he was impressed with the way McCain was working through some rough issues and bringing your colleagues along with you. And that impressed him. It's not just with something that has a political impact on our generation and bringing a lot of votes.

Mr. Kerry, a Democrat from Mas-

achusetts, the son of a U.S. Marine who was shot down in Vietnam, won 125 delegates in Michigan, the biggest recruiting contest so far with 125 delegates. By contrast, Mr. Bush, who placed second in Michigan and Wisconsin, had 70 votes.

The results in Michigan and Wisconsin were a boost for Mr. Kerry's campaign. The Democratic Party's lead in Michigan is a vote in Michigan in Wisconsin, where Mr. Kerry is also considered strong, and in Tennessee and Virginia on Tuesday. Mr. Kerry had been campaigning heavily in those two Southern states in a hope of winning the would-be electors of the two Southern states. Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina and Gov. Wesley B. Clark of Arkansas.

Mr. Kerry, of Massachusetts, speaking at a rally before a Democratic event in Richmond, Va., on Saturday evening, held the record

unsettled

social

complex

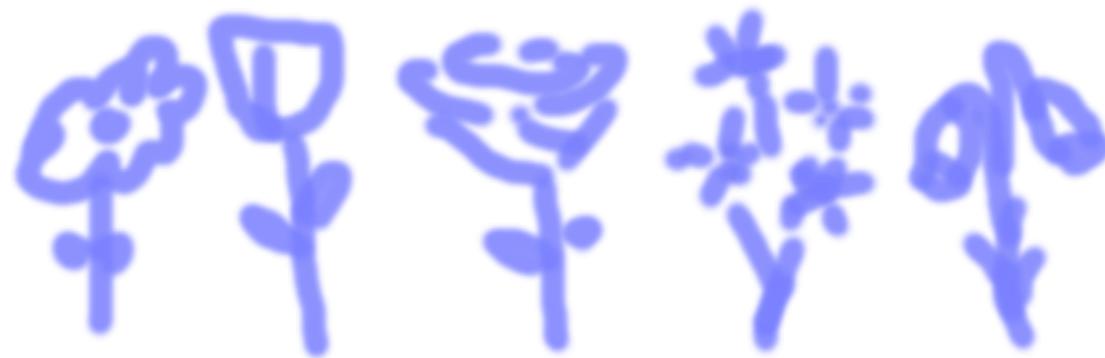
loosely ordered

messy

Fallible

Remove control and increase the metadata, give knowledge infinite space and easy connection, and it becomes unsettled, complex, varied loosely ordered, social, messy, fallible. It assumes the shape of the Net. And, it also looks a lot more like us humans. The Net is a better reflection of our nature and our interests than print and broadcast ever could be.

**An abundance of  
difference**





I want to come back to the initial disagreement. Is the Web like this or like this? The answer is yes.



It's as if we could see what people are saying in the privacy of their living rooms or booths in restaurants and bars. It'd peel paint off a bench. But Now can see every discussion. Welcome to who we are.

You can hear

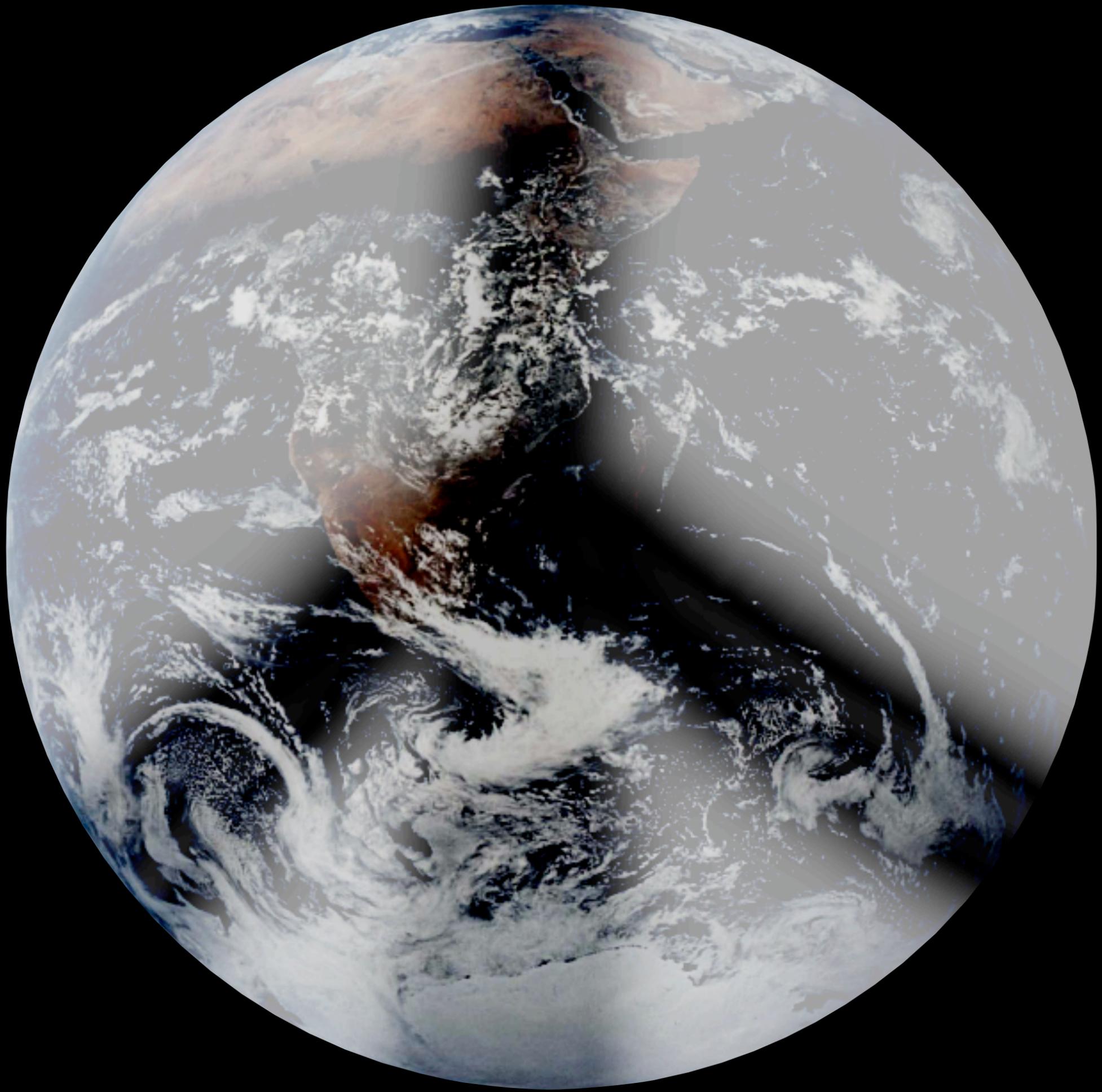
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<a href="http://  
www.globalvoices.org">
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linked differences

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</a>
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at this amazing  
site.

But the Web isn't just voices. It's about links. Connections. Those discussions increasingly are linked. Connecting is our better nature.



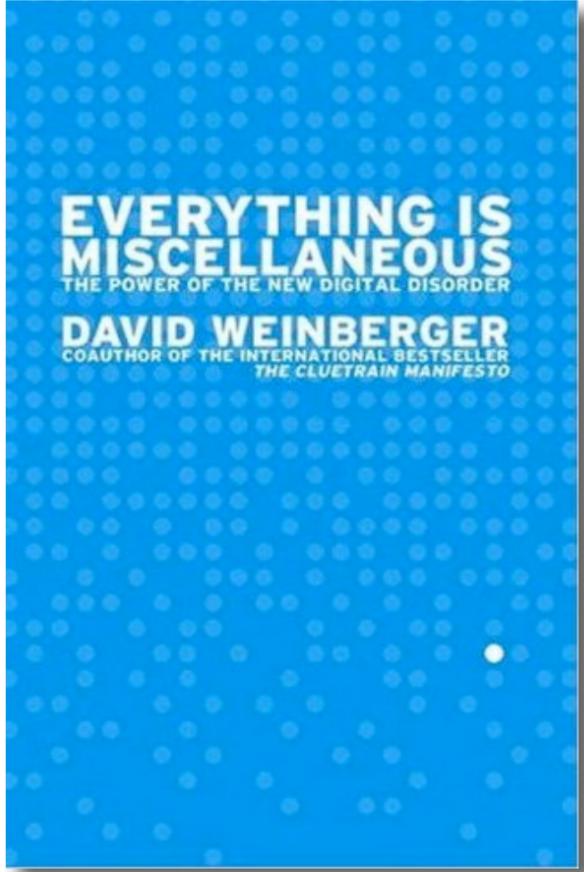
So, welcome to our hope.

Thank you.

David Weinberger

Blog: [www.JohnTheBlog.com](http://www.JohnTheBlog.com)

Email: [self@evident.com](mailto:self@evident.com)

The image shows the front cover of the book 'Everything is Miscellaneous: The Power of the New Digital Disorder' by David Weinberger. The cover is a vibrant blue with a pattern of small, light blue dots. The title 'EVERYTHING IS MISCELLANEOUS' is printed in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters at the top. Below it, the subtitle 'THE POWER OF THE NEW DIGITAL DISORDER' is in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The author's name 'DAVID WEINBERGER' is prominently displayed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. At the bottom, in a very small white font, it reads 'COAUTHOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER THE CLUETRAIN MANIFESTO'.

EVERYTHING IS  
MISCELLANEOUS  
THE POWER OF THE NEW DIGITAL DISORDER  
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THE CLUETRAIN MANIFESTO