

Fear and the Internet

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The Internet Will Disappear

- I'm hoping that the Internet will go away
- Transition into the infrastructure – like power, like water
- Still major work to be done (like with power, like with water)
- But it's engineering, not world-shaking
- That said.....

Net-delivered services are reshaping the world

- Google search has revolutionized information-finding
- Blogs have revolutionized information-sharing
- Skype has revolutionized person talking
- SMS, IM and MMORPGs are reshaping the lives of our kids
- This is a revolution in progress.

How To Delay Revolutions

- Introduce inappropriate regulation
- Increase the cost of deployment
- Put priority on intellectual property
- Make the innovators afraid

Inappropriate regulation

- Cripple technology to support regulation
 - On a net delivering HDTV, attempt to control 1-Kbyte emails in the core of the net
 - On a net connecting the whole world, attempt to enforce national ideas of "appropriate"
 - On a net with dynamic routing, attempt to enforce single-point wiretaps
- Technologists will give you what you ask for. You will not know the consequences.

Make things more expensive

- Regulate what people "must" do
 - Mandate keeping of logs for email
 - Am I allowed to send my own mail? For how long?
 - Require ID-cards for certain functions
 - In a virtual world, you've required physical presence (or government-issued electronic ID)
 - Demand that "sender pays"
 - In an innovative world, insist that "sender" must be a well-defined concept before deployment

Intellectual Property

- Copyright is good, and needs respecting
 - But not at all costs
 - DRM is a very blunt tool
 - Trying to outlaw "potential tools for infringing" is a rathole
 - Scared innovators are bad innovators
- Patents are a way to slow down others
 - Mutually Assured Destruction patent strategies are both expensive and ineffective
 - Scared innovators are bad innovators

Governing and Innovation

- Government is (largely) about preventing bad outcomes, and permitting good ones
- Understanding both the technology and the sociology of the Internet is critical
- Creating fear is harmful
- When in doubt, less is often more