

B345 Internet Science and Technology

Week 12 lecture 2

Today's Lecture Learning Objective

- Understand the social issues related to the Internet.

Social Issues

- The Internet's impact on society.
- Impact of society on the development of the Internet.

Preliminaries

- A note on readings
 - See lecture handout "Social Implications of the Internet".
- A note on results
 - Nothing is conclusive! ...and it shouldn't be!

The "Internet" in Sociology

- Definitions of "Internet"
 - include usage and users.
- Why sociologists are interested?
 - Study new technology in early stages of diffusion.
 - Internet as a multi-mode medium.
 - Importance of decisions for future and for society as a whole.

Studies on Social Impact

- Inequality
- Impact on time use and community
- Impact on politics
- Impact on organizations
- Impact on culture

Inequality

- Increase or decrease inequality and opportunity?
- Digital Divide
- "Formal access" and "effective access".
- Information abundance - attention scarcity.

Impact on Time Use and Community

- Time displacement
- Concepts of community
 - "Online" and "virtual" communities
- Social capital.

Impact on Politics

- Informing public.
- Engaging public.
- Political polarization.
- Deliberative democracy.

Impact on Organizations

- Limits of Internet effects.
- Work group effects.
 - Communication
- Firm structure effects.
- Industry-specific effects.
 - Transport
 - Medical industry
 - Finance

Impact on Culture

- Bountiful Diversity
- Hypersegmentation
- Massification

Society's Impact on Internet Development

- "Anything to anyone"
 - Everyone wants to shape the Internet.
- Economic and social policies impacts.
 - Access policies.
 - Privacy.
 - Intellectual property.