

Future of Technology BoF RIPE 69

Amsterdam / London, November 2014
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In November 2014, in London, a bi-annual meeting of RIPE community was held — engineers & business-people who are building the current Internet. Surprisingly, this time “we” looked into the far-away future.

This is my contribution.

I am Goddess of Spring by name, Speaker for the Nature, and a tree-hugging hippie, utopian, hacker - as well as “recovering technocrat”:

<https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/User:Becha>

(and NOT speaking as an employee of RIPE NCC!)

My collection of links & references on this topic:

https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/Hackers_tribes#UnCivilization

If you want to continue talking about this, and preparing for the far-away future together, join the mailing list:

<https://lists.pusci.nl/wws/info/uncivilization>

Main messages:

We are heading towards the collapses - economical, energy and ecological collapses.

In the past, technology in general, and Internet in particular, has been created for those in power, and used by those in power to remain in power. Industrial capitalism that the Internet is part of is increasing the inequality gap, not helping the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed, and destroying the biosphere. If we ignore this aspect, and continue to “do our part”, the short term future will look the same as the past — **better**, for the technocrats and privileged people in the audience (and those reading this in electricity-powered houses & using metal+plastic_based computers); and **worse**, for the poor & marginalized, indigenous people; for endangered species of plants & animals, and for the biosphere: the forests, lakes, mountains, oceans, rivers...

We, civilized humans, in addition to be technologists, are *also* living beings. We can not escape laws of Nature. We do not control Nature. We are part of Nature.

Our (technological) future depends on the future of the Planet.

Nature will have the final word.

Keywords: communal, responsible, animal-focused, sharing, natural, decay&giving-back , long-term-view, interested in helping the poor, marginalized, unprivileged ; reclaiming the pride of the uncivilized.

my future focus

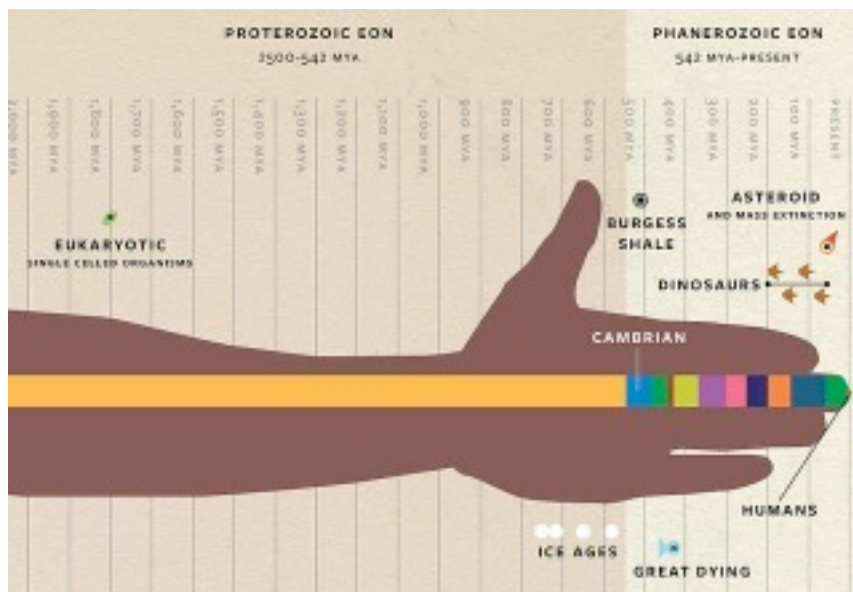
vs

**current common-sense
for civilized cultures**

communal / commons
responsibilities
animal-focused,
sharing,
natural,
decay&giving-back ,
long-term-view ,
interested in helping the
poor, marginalized,
unprivileged
uncivilized,
cyclic time

individualistic
demanding “human rights”
humans are special
consumerism & convenience
techno-focused
growth-focused
short-term view
benefiting privileged, rich, powerful - “ruling class”

civilization as the result of “progress”
linear time



My response to the questions discussed:

- Is the future predictable?

Some elements of “the future” are mathematically predictable: phenomena with linear growth follow the exponential function:

www.albartlett.org/presentations/arithmic_population_energy_transcript_english.html

- did anyone ever predict the future correct

yes: Club of Rome, has made a prediction, in 1972, in their work "Limits to Growth":

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Limits_to_Growth

40 years later most of their predictions were confirmed:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/looking-back-on-the-limits-of-growth-125269840/?no-ist>

Next 40 years: <http://www.clubofrome.org/?p=703>

- Who is making and generating our future?

the Planet has a definite part in deciding our future!

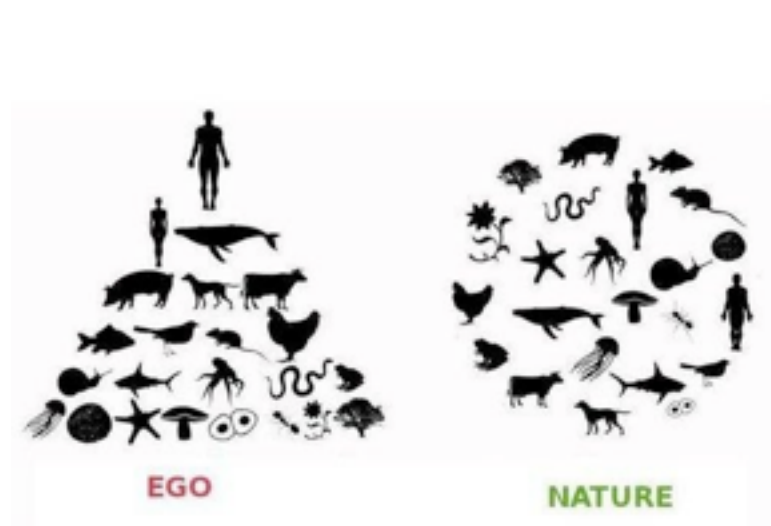
We are part of the natural world... that we keep destroying.

in other words -- future of the Internet depends on the future of the life on Earth.

Natural laws and natural limitations are dictating our future: laws of ecology are applicable to the human animals too, however much we would like to think we are special.

We are deciding our future, based on the myths we believe in.

These myths need to change, if we are going to save this planet for the future generations.



- singularity - Nonsense or true?

Nonsense: <http://www.antipope.org/charlie/blog-static/2011/06/reality-check-1.html>

- is the future getting better or worse? utopian vs dystopian

In the short term - 5 or 50 years in the future

- better, for the technocrats and privileged people on the panel & in the audience.
- worse, for the poor & marginalized, indigenous people & endangered species of plants & animals, as well as for the forests, lakes, oceans, rivers...

On the longer term - 100 to 1000 years

- worse for everyone
 - no oil & gas any more
 - average temperature 2, 4 or 6 degrees higher
 - melted snow caps, polluted air, plasticized oceans..
 - most life on Earth extinct..

On the really long term: in year 3000 or 5000

- better: when most of the humans are dead & gone, nature will recover; and an utopian-me likes to believe that remaining few humans will be able to learn from our mistakes and start all over again, in a more sustainable way:

- * by fulfilling responsibilities for the world we live in
- * by giving back more then taking away
- * by accepting that death is part of the cycle of life



Notes prepared before the actual questions were published:

1. replacement for the "Internet": peer to peer networks
 - commons!
 - Community Owned Wireless Mesh networks
 - > will be called something else, not internet
 - > will exist IN SPITE of "us"
 - > will replace the old models & hierarchical architectures
 - > NOT server / client
 - > NOT provider / consumer
 - > instead: peers, equals, empowered and literate: with r/w/x skills
 - > ownership and operations will be done via COMMONS
 - > security will also be decentralized
 - > governance will also be decentralized
 - > comm. networking is NOT to be left only to the techies any more!!
 - > "civil society", and RURAL society also has a say!
 - > marginalized are being left out — again — by the privileged
 - > economy will be decentralized (Heather March)

<http://georgiebc.wordpress.com/2013/05/24/binding-chaos/>

2. energy efficiency !!

- > i would expect that RIPE community would be interested in this topic
- > next week there is a conference in london with this topic!!!!
- > without energy -> no (future) internet!!

<http://telcoenergyefficiency.com>

3. internet == wasting energy, wasting natural resources, polluting nature

- > amounts of energy needed to watch cat videos?? data centers?? ixps??
- > mobile phones : "future of the internet"
 - > if by 2020 there will be another BILLION mobile phones
 - what will they be made of??
 - > on the limited planet!!
- > IoT !?!?!?
 - > privacy??
 - > waste?
 - > CONSUMERISM??!!!
- > **what we (technocrats) do is UNSUSTAINABLE!!!!**

<https://wiki.techinc.nl/images/3/39/Revspace-lightning-talk.pdf>

3.5 internet is HELPING to increase INEQUALITY!

- > internet is a product of capitalism
- > inherently unfair & unequal system, making the rich richer and poor poorer
- > enforces the culture of entitlement, consumerism, profits...

<http://lanyrd.com/2014/odc14/sddyrz/>

4. the illusion of growth!! the obsession with more, faster, stronger ...
- > is unsustainable (Peak Oil, Peak Soil, uranium, plastics, water, food...)
 - > is unrealistic (exponential function; Limits to Growth)
 - > capitalist industrial economy of growth will collapse very soon (Naomi Klein)

<http://thischangeeverything.org/>

5. ultimately, in order to survive & be sustainable
- > will have to stop being anthropocentric
 - > we have to stop believing we are more special than other life on Earth
 - > will have to stop behaving like it all belongs to us
 - > have to stop stealing & destroying the land and water for other animals
 - > we have to take RESPONSIBILITIES, instead of demanding "human rights"

Towards an alternative: communal solutions and a responsibilities approach
(<http://unwin.wordpress.com/2014/09/01/prolegomena-on-human-rights-and-responsibilities/>)

- > personal responsibilities
- > communal responsibilities
- > responsibilities of the states
- > responsibilities of "international community"

- > we need to start listening to nature (Nature is Speaking) #NatureIsSpeaking
- > we have to CONSIDER THE SQUIRRELS

my wishes:

- living in "commons":
 - the communities, of forests, lakes & seas, plants and animals - and people
- REJECT more and more gadgets, connectivity, bandwidth...
 - reuse, recycle, repair
 - consider NO ELECTRICITY scenario!
- prepare for the collapse!
 - > hackers will be a bit more prepared than consumers



Back to the “(near) future of the Internet”:

- Internet & surveillance related — next step — neighborhood ISP
 - decentralized distributed mesh network between neighbors
 - shared services: data storage, email, Internet connection
 - truly decentralized infrastructure, owned and operated by COMMONS
- another small step:
OPEN everything: <http://www.opendevdevelopmentcamp.org/#odc-about>
 - open government, open data, open knowledge
 - “promise to empower us as citizens and consumers”
 - > how about not-citizens? animals?
 - common ideology is to share: knowledge, information, tools, and data.
 - How to develop a safe, inclusive and equitable environment?
- allow for the unexpected — do not shut away possibilities of newcomers!!
 - RIRs, ISPs... avoid becoming like ITU & Telcos!!becha.home.xs4all.nl/hackers-philosophers-utopian-network-dec-2012-becha.pdf
 - “Adapt or die: What I would do if I ran a telecom company”, Neelie Kroeshttp://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-647_en.htm
 - do not make a cartel! do not try to self-preserve & self-perpetuate!
(nothing lasts forever! make space for the new!)
- make it goal finish your job & to become not needed



"The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function."

Theoretical explanation of the arithmetic of “growth”:

http://www.albartlett.org/presentations/arithmetric_population_energy_transcript_english.html