

"today's internet is
killing our culture and
assaulting our
economy" andrew
keen ...

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The aim of this essay is to mainly critique the viewpoint made by Andrew Keen that " Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture and Assaulting Our Economy. " First, the brief introduction of Andrew Keen's book and his viewpoints will be introduced. Second, the Web 2. 0 applications such as 1) Wikipedia, 2) Blog, and 3) YouTube will be brought up into the essay and discuss their pros and cons to the Internet environment. Third, Keen's arguments about these three Web 2. 0 applications will be demonstrated. Finally, the conclusion to Keen's arguments will be concluded. Keen's book and his viewpoints

Andrew Keen, the author of the book " Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture and Assaulting Our Economy. ", feels painful that digital elites overtop of the cultural gatekeepers and crowds' knowledge took place of professionals. He addresses the points that professional journalists, reporters, editors, musicians and other experts in different areas. These cultural gatekeepers are gradually replaced by amateurs. Therefore, the truth and personal opinions, professional and amateurs' views in this world can hardly be distinguished from. Keen made many intensely interesting points in his book and the summaries are followings (Keen, 2007),

Google is a parasite which can not create its own idea. Its only accomplishment is to invent an excellent algorithm that can connect these contents to each other on the Internet. Keen accepts the fact that Wikipedia can be edited by everyone in public and those authors are willing and sometimes addicted to share their knowledge around the web. However, the fact is that Wikipedia can sometimes be different from the truth and sometimes confuse public having the idea of Wikipedia is always a <https://assignbuster.com/todays-internet-is-killing-our-culture-and-assaulting-our-economy-andrew-keen-2007-critique-this-viewpoint-assignment/>

cyclopedia that can be relied on and referred to. Splogs establish an entire low quality, meaningless, long and tedious web system environment.

The purposes of doing this are to waste Internet users' time and seal the benefits from advertisement host. There is a research done by University of Maryland indicates that there are millions of Blogs nowadays and 56% of them are meaningless. Moreover, Blogs can receive around 0.9 million post articles everyday. The most powerful and popular blog search engine Technorati points out those meaningless blogs are taken nearly 90% of the new created blogs. Flogs are some blogs that claim mutual but in fact sponsored by companies or organizations for doing business purposes.

For instance, the public relation companies can do such things that this to help their clients or destroy clients' competitors. In 2006, one of the public relation companies that associate Wal-Mart helped the company resolve and attack those negative opinions against Wal-Mart on the web. Keen's states that we certainly need media in the future otherwise the essential newspaper and television will be closed. Moreover the on-line news website need places where can find the content to write about. Those authors of the InstaPundit Blog need to obtain the information.

If organization has not sufficient news resource and influence to give the report in the daily life, these network authors can hardly comment on the Iraqi war, or 2008 presidential election. If we do not have traditional news, the on-line website would be compelled to completely give up facts and simply plait the whole story. Rober Samuelson said the network democracy is the biggest wave of collective crazy exposes in the human history. In

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particular, its shortcoming damages our politics elaboration integrity. The amateur news industry makes the serious debate trivially change and loss its genuine shape.

This is the biggest nightmare of all for those political theoreticians in history such as Plato, Aristotle, Edmund Burke and Hannah Arendt when democracy has been degenerated and dominated by the motley crowds and rumor spreaders. Web 2.0 applications The purpose of the Web 2.0 websites lies in connecting through the Internet network, then producing the network effect, such as MySpace is mainly for meeting friends, and LinkedIn is mainly for job purpose. All these websites are hoping to create a greater human relations result through the link of the Internet. In the definition of Web 2.0 from Tim O'Reilly (2005), eBay, Wikipedia, YouTube, Blog, Facebook, and Skype etc. are all the creations from the new Web 2.0 generation. In this essay, the discussion will be mainly focus on 1) Wikipedia, 2) Blog, and 3) YouTube these three Web 2.0 applications in order to reflect Keen's argument.

1)Wikipedia Interdiction Wikipedia is an online cyclopedia that collects from crowds' knowledge. It allows users to create and edit its content for free on the Internet. It does not require identification or registry to the website. Everyone can just go to the edit page then easily edit the content (Lee, 2007).

The credibility and accuracy are all relied on the readers and writers supervising each other. Moreover, the website has over than one thousand of Wikipedia administrators to avoid irrelevant contents or editing debates etc. Therefore, they have the right to block the articles or even stop the

action of editing (website: wiki watch). Pros and Cons Meredith Farkas states pros and cons about Wikipedia. The advantages are easy to use, web base, anyone can make changes, findability, many free and open source, flexible and extensible (Farkas, 2006). Its disadvantages are too open, regarding to its ownership of content, vandalism and spam.) Blog Interdiction A blog is defined as a web page with minimal to no external editing that provide on-line commentary, updated and presented in reverse chronological order, with hyperlinks to other online sources (Daniel & Henry, 2004). Pros and Cons The most major advantages for Blog are the ease of use and the availability of many free open source or low-cost software and hosting options to return to them. It's also acceptable to discuss topics or ideas that are not fully developed yet. The temporal nature of blogging makes it easier to write a brief introduction with a promise to deliver more later on.

The most censorable of disadvantage is Blogs are sometimes prone to vandalism. The serious quality issues, because their nature will relatively and potentially lack of control over their content (Kamel Boulos, Maramba, Wheeler, 2006). 3) YouTube Interdiction YouTube is simply a platform for public to share their videos on the web. Internet browsers can easily access to the web, watching any videos or even uploading home-made videos up to the web (website: YouTube). Pros and Cons The major advantages of YouTube are easy to use and it is for everyone for free.

Also, expressing the creativity through YouTube is a major benefit. People can easily get access from Internet and broadcast video around the world. However, YouTube's biggest downside is the web is open for everyone with

strict limitations. Anyone can see and post videos. Therefore, there could be issues of privacy invasion. Moreover, copyright infringement issues are still in debating. Keen's arguments Those "Cult of the Amateurs" use the power of technologies, through Blogs, YouTube uploading or editing Wikipedia to express and discuss issues happening in this world.

The new form of media has been phenomenal and gradually replaces the mainstream media. The advertising budgets for magazines and TV dramatically turn to Internet. In the new visual world, music is made from amateur garage bands; movies and TV are based on YouTube as the media platform; News could be episodes showing celebrities' gossip. "Objective" can hardly be seen on the Internet. Bloggers use their own preferences and logic for describing things to re-packing the facts. Moreover, many Web 2.0 users use Internet to confirm their biases and line to others who have the same opinions.

In the Internet world, it is difficult have a debate on important political and social issues because the election candidates can be smirch by its competitors; the over exaggerated commercials are just like virus written all over the web. The fact that the new innovation and evaluation of Web 2.0 is bringing us the surface of the world but not analyzing in depth and it is the shallow information but not thinking carefully before making judgments. Web 2.0 mainly relies on amateurs more than experts, so many search engines and websites are only care about the clicking rate rather than reliability of the resources.

Moreover, having anonymous all over the Internet, Identifications and purposes can hardly be confirmed. Therefore, mistaken information and rumors can easily be spread on the Internet. For instance, Wikipedia has higher clicking rate than Britannica Online and also its special editing design for everyone makes mistaken information, non-proven evidences, even lies written all over the Internet world. Keen points out Web 2.0 users love information restructure and cut and past engineering and this can invade the others' intellectual property especially music and video piracy can have the direct impact on record sales and movie industries.

According to the estimation from Technorati search engine, there are more than 70 million Blogs and with the increasing speed of 12 thousand a day. MySpace, the world largest social networking website has over than 180 million people's personal data but many of them are counterfeits. That is, people do not have clear understanding of those free resources can one day ask them to pay the price. We make use of the network to confirm our one-sided standpoint, linking to the homology group and opinions to the websites.

Bloggers are becoming clubs that have similar opinions, gathering a community that has indulge in self-delusion. They seem living in a community with walls around them. People inside all have exact points of view and all dialogues reflect to make the person trust on at certain degree. It is a kind of digitalized dangerous from themselves. The only thing they want to hear is we are on the same side having the same conversations. Keen also criticizes about the birth of Youtube that two young man around

20 years old with an opens 18 month and has not yet make money of website (Youtube), selling USD 1, 650, 000, 000. ach of them has stock worth USD 300, 000, 000. The sudden millionaire and this kind of rational quotation over night, having already influenced other Americans, in succession infected this kind of not rational attitude and the faith. “ The non-reasonableness prosperity”, not especially Web2. 0 have the outcomes. In 20 centuries, a thermodynamic power demonstration such as Netscape, Yahoo, eBay and Amazon... etc. were Web1. 0 harbinger. Can not deny, there are many new things that have creativity and practical functions appear in the process of the quick Internet development.

Internet is enriching our originally needy and lifeless world, but we still have to prevent our concepts and values from being severely influenced by the updated Internet. The second or third-hand information went through amateurs can be intentional or accidental purposes but the massive information indeed scatter on the web can hardly be stopped just like the example from Wikipedia. Though Keen's book has matched this point several times, the strong power of “ amateur culture” can never be ignored.

Therefore, understanding and learning from the amateurs could be the most important subject for Web 2. generation. The answer Keen finally brings, it becomes clear suddenly. When he said the assertion of increasing the power government and law, you even can see his helpless: these seem limit the freedom and democracy, but it is for preventing the disappearance of real freedom and democracy, for preventing the amateur culture thoroughly demolishes the professional culture. The biggest enemy of Web2. 0 is exactly

Web2.0 itself-this just is the real warning from Keen. If this continues, dissolute unruly amateurs with civic right should only meet no wins.

Also the whole environment will be destroyed and can not be rebuilt.

Evidences, In this section, some evidences and examples will be presented in order to have more clear ideas to evaluate Keen's arguments. Rob considers the browsers on Internet are different from traditional consumers. These people will use Internet to contribute their knowledge to companies offering valuable opinions and advices. The user-end decision making proces is so different from traditional top-down process. This kind of interaction with customers by going through Blogs, WebPages has been successful in the market.

Therefore, many large companies have not only to face the power from one-way or two-way marketing models but also the third power- peer power (BusinessWeek, 2005). Jennifer Gonzalez-Reinhart think Wikipedia has the advantages that can disseminate knowledge across time, regions, people and organizations. It can also integrate as part of working process for employees to utilize their knowledge sharing system in the companies (Gonzalez-Reinhart, 2005). However, Wikipedia has always been criticized by its over open to the public.

Jeffrey Bairstow knows Wikipedia is a website that everyone can edit on anything. Perhaps it sounds like a recipe for total and utter disaster and, indeed it could be (Bairstow, 2003). Moreover, Antony Bruno thinks

Wikipedia's open-source approach to information is a double-edged sword.

Browsers can benefit from the knowledge and expertise sharing on the web

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and fast updated under control by thousands of readers who constantly monitor the topic. On the other hand, the design of the web editing system can be easily misinformed by a single person (Bruno, 2007).

Additionally, one of the most famous documented examples of Web vandalism occurred on Wikipedia in the biographical article about John Seigenthaler, Sr (website: USA Today). Comparing to Wikipedia, Britannica hires professionals in different fields to participate in the whole project and they will follow academic research methods to find out all the facts that are closest to the truth. However, both Wikipedia and Britannica have different ways of finding out the truth, the investigation made by British magazine "Nature" shows the fact that Britannica and Wikipedia have the same level of accuracy.

The results of this research are Britannica 2.92 mistakes per article, slightly lower than Wikipedia 3.86 mistakes per article. Though Wikipedia may not be perfect and the academia does not give it full credit, the speed of updating its data is far better than Britannica. Moreover, it does not need to hire professional editors and also save the time-consuming editing processes (Magazine: Nature). In addition, the research done by Huang and Yu was using five equations (Variance, Covariance, Regression and Correlation) from the Encyclopedia of Statistics in Behavioral Science to evaluate the usability of Wikipedia as an Encyclopedia.

The result shows there is a significant error on Wikipedia (Huang and Yu, 2003). An example from Keen's book in chapter 3 points out that sometimes advertising news look very similar to WebPages from those social networking sites.

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websites such as the Myspace or Facebook. Sometimes a very red hot film on Youtube turns out to be manufactured by an enterprise that intentionally wants to guide the consumer opinion. Similar phenomenon, in fact has aroused huge discussions in most of the countries.

That is, more and more manufacturers invite the tribe guests (bloggers) to try out their own the merchandise and read the new book. The main purpose of having this is to use Bloggers' influences to increase the popularity, credibility of the product, do marketing research before the product appeared on the market. Wishful bigotry made by Keen in his book such as BitTorrent etc. P2P software can only be useful for illegal transmissions. However, the Blizzard gaming company uses this technology to release the latest game demonstration to the market.

Moreover, Keen think the substantial evidence for long tail theory will be that many independent file companies have lost their sounds in this Web 2.0 trend but in fact the actual long tail lie in numerous independence manufactures, the small company, each profits in the total, may exceed the large company in single profit of product (Anderson, 2004). The story Keen has written can not always be truth. Sometimes he uses too simple and bias presentation in order to let us think the fact is what he just told.

For instance, In his book, the author of " Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and The Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity"

Lawrence Lessig is an anti- copyright personage who promotes the replication usage because Keen did not mention that Lawrence think

persistently defend to block up the replication can have more disadvantages

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than benefits. Hence, the method of leading users in a positive way should be the right solution to the problem. Furthermore, the creation of using the CC authorization also depends on the intellectual property law to develop its strength.

However, Keen has strengthened his points by rising sarcasm on Jimmy Walse, founder of Wikipedia, has used Wikipedia to declare the news that he broke up with girlfriend. Conclusions Splog, Flog and UGC (user-generated corruption) are most frequently mention terminologies in keen's book. They are however only small parts of the dark and complex feature of Internet world (Keen, 2007). Despite Keen has his points that Internet is killing our culture, but after those pros and cons for Web 2.0 applications and evidences from other researchers in this area. The conclusion can never be easy to make.

It seems two forces can always make their better points against each other. It will also rely what viewpoint the people are going to look at and in what level and degree. It can hardly be convinced by Keen's arguments because he sees Web 2.0 as a whole and in particular dislike Wikipedia. However, by going through different Web 2.0 applications (Three in this essay) the major disadvantage is "free" this concept. Most of Web 2.0 are free and have little control to the end-users and it is because of this the knowledge sharing can with any obstacles. Then it can always go back and around the argument again.

Perhaps Antony Bruno is right about the Web 2.0 is a double-edged sword which has advantages and downsides (Bruno, 2007). Keen should know this

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better than anyone else due to his previous experiences. The only reason why he will push his argument so hard is that he had too much in love with Internet, so he does not hope people have excessive optimism and wrong expectation to it. Because maybe after the hope fall through, people will anti-, negate, and sneer at it. This is exactly represent what just keen says “ this book is not a general commentary, but an apostasy work. If this judgment was made by a conservatism that embraces to reject to the network development with the estranged attitude from beginning to end, then probably it would be only worth a smiling, but pointing out from the former Internet believer that have ever believed in the Internet world. It could be necessary that we then have to open our mind to listen. Though little bigotry was made, it does not damage Keen’s scathing warning.

Because the Web2. 0 has brought the subversion to this world, the cultural revolution of anti- tradition, decentralization, free market, the Utopia types.

Although old fashion is still fine, a little bit immodesty it will be seen as dogmatic and suffered to uproot—the classic culture in mankind’s civilization, tradition, highly divide of professional etc. are all like this. Have not said that there is no times like today’s society that in a very few years many new theories are built up, widely speeded, destroyed, and then reborn the new trend and theories from it. Web 2. 0 creates lots of junk information but thanks to the democracy of the Internet, we can find the truth behind the false, so, I still embrace with optimistic attitude.

Probably Paul Simon is right about no matter we like Web 2. 0 or not, we are going forward to it. Reference A false Wikipedia ‘ biography’ (USA Today 29

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