

LIS-3353

Quasi-Anonymity  
And  
Cognitive/Social Surplus



# Quasi-Anonymity

- When people aren't perfectly hidden, but more or less act like it.

....A/S/L?



# Interesting pseudonymous people

- Deep Throat (Watergate)
- Why
- Banksy
- Satoshi Nakamoto



Myspace. Ugly pages, horrible poetry..





# Disposable identities

Important tool for human development..

..or, would you rather your “permanent record” suddenly become reality?

(this is both a very technical and very social issue)



Furthermore...the value of pseudonyms.

- Consider content of Facebook/Google v.

Reddit, et al



# Cognitive Surplus

(thanks, Clay Shirky)

- Industrial Revolution!
- The people of London moved from the farm to the city...meaning

No more dawn to dusk, but 8 hour days.

What did they do?



# Gin. Lots of Gin.





# No, really. LOTS of gin

(any resemblance to college life is purely coincidental, I'm sure)





What replaced gin in the good ol' USA?



What replaced gin in the good ol' USA?





But then, the Internet...



Okay, that..but what else?



# Econ 101: How to make complicated things with a bunch of people?





“Incentives” or “coercion”

Either way, it's – 'do this or you don't eat.'

This is basic economics, right?

....well, it was...



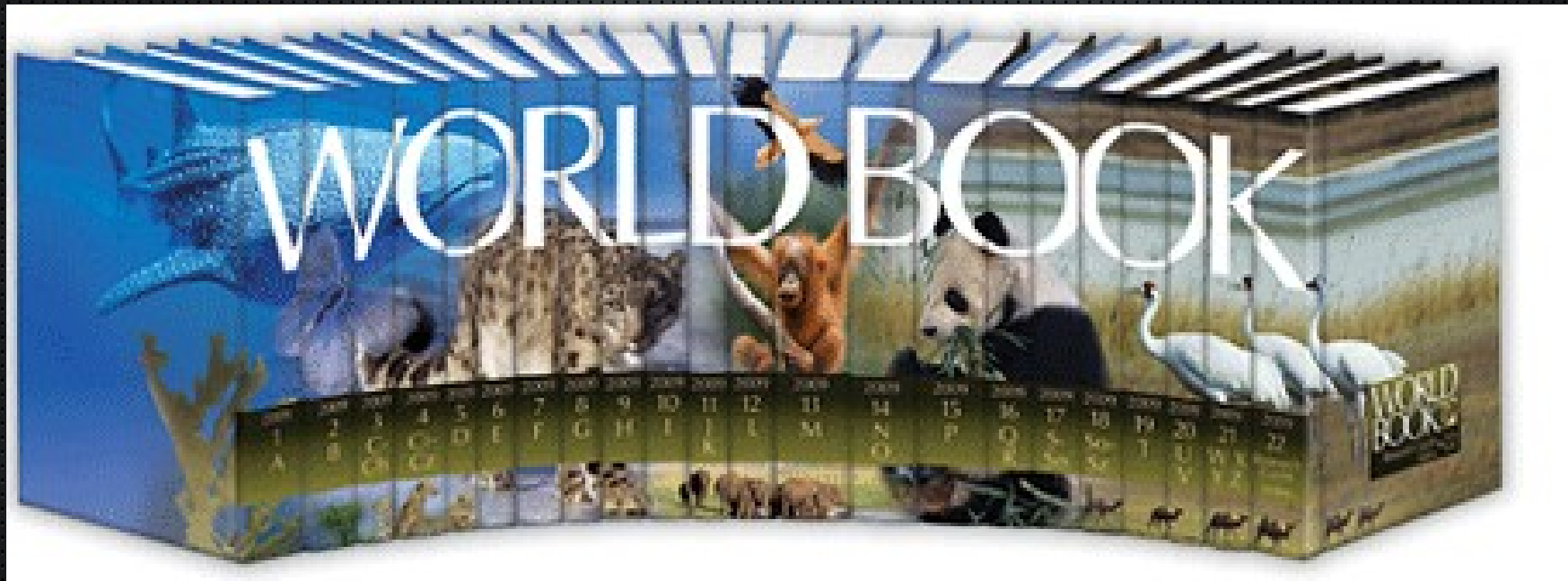
Also, the converse idea, that we  
hear:

“If you can't get paid to do it, it won't get  
done.”

(pity the poor music industry)



# Encyclopedias?





# Spontaneous Organization

- Usually, you come up with a concrete purpose or a goal, THEN organize a group around achieving that..

But this can now happen BACKWARDS thanks to the internet. The group organizes, THEN just sort of ends up doing something surprisingly useful/complex.



# Spontaneous Organization

Sometimes, but not always, fueled by

(pseudo) Anonymity



# New Theory: Moglen's Metaphorical Corollary to Faraday's Law

Faraday's Law: If you wrap a wire around a magnet and spin it, electricity flows through it:



# New Theory: Moglen's Metaphorical Corollary to Faraday's Law

Moglen's Corollary:

Wrap the Internet around every person on the planet and spin the planet, then “software” (i.e. beauty, science and culture) ” flows in the network.

*People will create things for one another's pleasure and to conquer their uneasy sense of being too alone.*



# Flash mobs





# Ice Cream (in Belarus?)





# Arrested.





4chan? /b/

**CENSORED**



“Anonymous”





# Reddit Stuff

- *Movie Plots*
- *Random acts of Pizza*
- *Etc etc etc*



# But of course, the good stuff..

- Wikipedia
- Linux
- Millions of specialized message boards on useful information, and so on...



# Social Activism

- Occupy Wall Street
- Black Lives Matter
- Ice Bucket Challenge

...and so on



# Crowdfunding? Kickstarter

- Cool! Pay for things that don't yet exist.

Pretty much the perfect stopper for the “there will be no blockbuster movies” argument.



# Have we entered a new era?

One of “social surplus exploitation?”



# “Crowdsourcing?”

- Yes, but notice the “sourcing” part.

Frequently, this is where the crowd does the work and someone else gets paid.

But we're all doing it, I suppose...



# “Crowdsourcing?”

e.g.

From couchsurfing to Airbnb?

From ridesharing to Uber?