

Hypothetical Contribution to The Guardian's "The Internet – Worldwide Wonder" (8 Aug 05)

The only forecast possible ten years ago was right. Innovation was unstoppable and it brought us to a whole new era in which Internet widely surpassed the picture of the library of Alexandria and has become more of a Roman forum. Our dependence on technology now goes further than our need for information and entertainment, and even further than our desire for empowerment. The web is now our life. Not a parallel of our real lives, but an actual intertwined part of the actual experience of the life we live every day.

Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have conquered the private spaces and made of every existence a story we are told is worth reading and sharing. Now they appear essential for work and school, as well as for basic social contact, hence the image of the forum. The web has become the arena where human thoughts, abilities, and interests are exchanged, strengthened, challenged, questioned and destroyed.

The evident existential shade of the account of technology in this new decade is only an imitation of its very character. In the same manner as screens multiply themselves in human hands (that is, furiously fast: projections assert that in the next few years we will find that there are more electronic devices than people on earth) uses and applications of technology are complementing and often replacing physical activities. We order food online, we pick and buy presents online, we gather ourselves around a table and play a board game online. This is the era of the real virtual existence... even though the gulf between the digitalized and the undigitalized was never took care of in many places. That means, for this time, that two kinds of people are living two kinds of incommensurable lives. The breach is not about access and economic conditions anymore, there are many worlds of information in that sea that now define what those two types of different beings (the digitalized and the undigitalized) are able to do, to know and to think.