Lecture 14 - Final Project Presentations

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Final Presentations

Most of the last class is spent in final presentations. Students were asked to write an abstract earlier, and then could develop that into either a presentation or a paper. Presentations were 15 minutes (but very informal); if the student wrote a paper, they mentioned the highlights for a few minutes.

After each presentation, the class asked questions and discussed.

Where have we come?

An overview of what the semester has consisted of, and how each piece is a pillar supporting a better understanding of the future. All these topics in the class are connected.

What are our predictions for the future?

Assuming the LHC, starting up in August, doesn't produce a mini-blackhole or Cat's Cradle matter, what's the future going to be like? What are the big questions?

- the tension between localization (higher transport costs, greater ability to produce locally) and globalization (from global communication and economy)– Will there be a global government, or universal capitalism, or something else?

- climate change and population growth– What can be done? What role will policy changes play, and what role public sentiment?

- corporations and advertising– Are we reaching an insupportable extreme of power, invasiveness, and manipulation?

- music, drugs, and porn– Our lives and how we relate to these three items are changing as we get easier access to them.

- fragmentation and multiple-membership– The social network is changing how people relate to their institutions, both in ways that utilize him more fully and in ways that support the modular man hypothesis.

- portable devices– How will they fit into our lives, and how will our lives change because of them?

- acceleration change and its consequences– How fast of change can we handle?

- intellectual property and biotech– The human genome is being purchased by companies with the money to research it; what's going to happen when life is owned?

Prediction: By 2028, computers will be 1000x faster and distributed in how they do everything. How will that change the world?

Prediction: By 2028, whole countries will be in danger of collapse because of lack of water and ecologic collapse. How will the rest of us respond?

Prediction: By 2028, the economic system of many countries will be in great turmoil, because of excessive borrowing and population changes. Will we ever see Social Security?

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