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Prophecy: Internet of The Future

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Internet of the future — the central tree of consciousness — shall open vistas of infinite tasks and unite humanity.

Around the main data centres of Internet, this digital castle where clouds of wires scatter like hair, there will surely be inscribed a pair of bones, a skull and the familiar inscription: “Danger,” for the slightest cessation of Internet’s work would cause the spiritual blackout of the entire world, a temporary loss of its consciousness.

Internet becomes the spiritual sun of the world, a great sorcerer and enchanter.

Let us imagine the data centres of Internet: in the air a web of pathways, a cloud of lightning bolts, now extinguishing, now igniting anew, transferring from one end of the building to another. A blue sphere of ball lightning, hanging in the air like a timid bird, obliquely stretched rigging. From this point on the globe, daily, like the spring flight of birds, from the life of the spirit, flocks of tidings disperse.

In this stream of lightning birds, spirit shall prevail over force, good counsel over threat.

The works of artists of pen and brush, the discoveries of artists of

thought, suddenly transport humanity to new shores...

Counsels from simple daily life will alternate with articles by citizens from the snowy summits of the human spirit. The crests of waves from the scientific sea are carried throughout the entire world to local servers, to become that very day the letters on dark canvases of enormous books, taller than houses, grown up in town squares, slowly turning their pages.

Internet Reading Rooms

These street books — Internet reading rooms! With their gigantic dimensions they frame the towns, fulfilling the tasks of all humanity.

Internet has solved the problem that the temple as such could not solve, and has become as necessary to every town as now the school or reading room.

The task of communion with the unified soul of humanity, with the unified daily spiritual wave sweeping over the world each day, fully irrigating the world with a rain of scientific and artistic news — this task is solved by Internet with the help of lightning. On the enormous shadow books of the towns, Internet has today printed the tale of a beloved writer, an article on fractional dimensions of space, descriptions of flights and news from neighbouring countries. Each person reads what pleases them. This book, one and the same for the entire world, stands in every town, eternally in a ring of readers, strictly typeset, a silent reading room in the cities.

But now in black type there appears on the books a momentous scientific announcement: Chemist X, famous in the narrow circle of his followers, has found methods for preparing meat and bread from widely distributed types of clay.

The crowd stirs and thinks: what will happen?

Earthquakes, fires, disasters within twenty-four hours will be printed on the books of Internet... The entire world will be covered with Internet servers...

Internet Auditoriums

The digital mouth of the autovoicer has transformed the caught and transmitted ripple of lightning into loud conversational speech, into song and human word.

The entire town has gathered to listen.

From the lips of the digital trumpet loudly rush the news of the day, affairs of state, weather reports, news from the turbulent life of the capitals.

It seems as if some giant is reading the giant book of the day. But this is the digital reader, this is the digital mouth of the autovoicer; sternly and clearly it communicates the morning news, sent to this town by the beacon of the main Internet data centre.

But what is this? Whence this stream, this flood across the entire world

of unearthly singing, the beating of wings, whistling and clicking and a whole silver torrent of wondrous, mad little bells, pouring from where we are not, together with children's singing and the noise of wings? Upon every town square of the world pour these voices, this silver downpour. Wondrous silver bells, together with whistling, have rushed from above. Perhaps heavenly sounds — spirits — have flown low over the hut. No...

The John Williams of the future is giving a nationwide evening of his creation, relying on Internet apparatus in the vast space from Alaska to New Zealand, beneath the blue walls of sky: this evening he's bewitching people, giving them communion with his soul, and tomorrow — an ordinary mortal! He, the artist, has enchanted his world; given it the singing of the sea and the whistle of wind! Every town and every hovel will be visited by divine whistles and all the sweet bliss of sounds.

Internet and Exhibitions

Why do people from distant places crowd around the enormous fiery canvases of Internet today? This is Internet sending through its apparatus coloured shadows, to make the entire world and every town a participant in the exhibition of artistic canvases from the distant capital. The exhibition has been transferred by light impulses and repeated in thousands of mirrors at all Internet data centres. If previously Internet was the world's hearing, now it is eyes for which there is no distance. The main Internet beacon has sent its rays, and the World Exhibition of

canvases by the finest artists has blossomed on the pages of reading room books in every place of the enormous world, visiting every inhabited point.

Internet Clubs

Let us come closer: proud skyscrapers drowning in clouds, a chess game between two people at opposite points of the globe, an animated conversation between a person in America and a person in Europe... Now, the reading rooms have darkened, and suddenly there carried the distant song of a singer, through digital throats Internet has cast the rays of this song to its digital singers: sing, digital! And to the word, nurtured in quiet and solitude, to its gushing springs, the entire world has taken communion. More obedient than strings beneath a violinist's fingers, the digital apparatus of Internet will speak and sing, obeying his volitional impulses.

In every town there will be apparatus of hearing and digital voice for one sense and digital eyes for another.

The Great Sorcerer

And now they have learned to transmit taste sensations — to a simple, coarse, though healthy dinner, Internet will cast in rays a taste dream, a phantom of completely different taste sensations.

People will drink water, but it will seem to them that before them is wine. A filling and simple dinner will don the mask of a luxurious

feast... This will give Internet still greater power over the consciousness of the world...

Even smells will in future be subject to the will of Internet: in deep winter the honey scent of lime trees, mixed with the scent of snow, will be a true gift of Internet to the world.

Contemporary doctors treat by suggestion at a distance through wire. The Internet of the future will be able to act also as a doctor, healing without medicine.

And further:

It is known that certain sounds, like “la” and “ti”, raise muscular capacity, sometimes by sixty-four times, condensing it for a certain period of time. In days of intensified labour, summer harvest time, construction of large buildings, these sounds will be sent out by Internet across the entire world, raising its strength many times over.

And finally — into Internet’s hands passes the organisation of national education. The Supreme Council of Sciences will send out lessons and readings for all schools of the world — both higher and lower.

The teacher will be only a companion during these readings. Daily flights of lessons and textbooks through the sky to town schools of the world, the unification of its consciousness in a single will.

Thus Internet will forge the unbroken links of the world soul and fuse humanity into one.

The essay was indeed written just about a hundred years ago, in 1921 by Velimir Khlebnikov, one of the founders of the radical artistic Futurist movement in Russia, a poet, “a poet’s poet”, and either a madman or a visionary or both or something beyond the terms, as described by his contemporaries and literary scholars. The translator only dared to put “Internet” instead of “Radio”, “data centre” and “server” instead of “headquarters/station” (Khlebnikov either fuses them into one or employs a pun; not clear), “iron” with “digital”, “town” instead of “village”, and “world” instead of “country”, leaving the rest intact, except some less crucial omissions and replacement of proper nouns to make the literary game more gaming. Knowing quite a bit of his lore, I do reckon Khlebnikov would’ve approved such an artifice.

The original was named — as you can guess — “Radio of the Future” and was indeed written in autumn 1921, less than a year before Khlebnikov’s death from illness and malnutrition, while he worked as a night watchman at the Russian Telegraph Agency in Pyatigorsk, where the poet spent his long nocturnal shifts dreaming of the transformative potential of radio. However, the essay was only published posthumously in 1927.

Eighty years later, from the literary world, the text resurfaced again and seeped into the sonic world, so dear and fascinating to Khlebnikov (among his countless other fancies). Thusly in 2008, Spanish artist Miguel Molina Alarcón created a sound collage interpretation of

Khlebnikov's essay, featured on the double CD project "Baku: Symphony of Sirens — Sound Experiments in the Russian Avant-Garde". The album is a remarkable collection as it presents reconstructions and original recordings of 72 key works from the Russian avant-garde of the first half of the 20th century. You can find the whole album on Bandcamp and listen to "The Radio of The Future" (it also can be found on Youtube):

P.S. For the curious: the very recent book, "Birds, Beasts and A World Made New" on two great poetic innovators, Guillaume Apollinaire and Velimir Khlebnikov, translated by Robert Chandler, is an invaluable introduction to Khlebnikov's poetry for English speakers.

GUILLAUME
APOLLINAIRE
& VELIMIR
KHLEBNIKO



BIRDS
BEASTS
AND A

This translation is my humble submission for the Symposium for this month's topic: Connection.

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