HOW DO WE MANAGE OUR DATA?

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24th April 2016 - Revised 4th February 2017

These days everyone is "connected" (to the internet, that is) and we continuously exchange huge quantities of data that – on a global level – increase at a rate faster than the net's ability to handle it. Nonetheless almost nobody wonders: "How much longer can the net continue to absorb it all?" Well, we've almost reached saturation point.

Something else that few people ask – while everyone else is blindly trustful of technology – is: "Do we really need all this information?"

An overwhelming majority of data is merely to pay homage to the senders' Egos, who think that 50 photos of themselves on the beach with their children and a video of them playing volleyball really are of such great interest that they must be posted online for all the world to see and memorialized forever.

Photos are digitally very bulky and take up lots of useful space in servers (computers permanently online and equipped with storage memory for their own data), but videos are even bulkier, and these are also carelessly uploaded daily.

Evidently the situation must change soon, because at the moment we don't have adequate server storage. Adequate in what way? First of all they're not compact enough to hold enormous amounts of data within a small volume (they're still two-dimensional when they should be three-dimensional), but more importantly, they are unable to preserve stored data for very long periods without a power source.

They've managed to convince us that the 10 years guaranteed for the data on a DVD are a lot and we even theorize that better storage in the near future will hold for up to 100 years; compare their duration with texts written on stone or, better yet, those written by Tibetan Lamas on gold leaf. These latter clearly come out the winners – small amounts of well-chosen data, very long duration.

Apparently a new permanent memory technology that is sufficiently large and durable is finally here, and is currently undergoing development in view of eventually entering the market (5 D DATA STORAGE, http://www.southampton.ac.uk/news/2016/02/5d-data-storage-update.page): do we consider it beneficial to transmit an amount of data so exorbitant that future civilizations can't see it all because it would take far too much time?

Given that the networks won't be able to support for much longer the current rate of data upload, the uploads will soon need to become selective. Based on quality? Not a chance! The first criterion will be "first in, first out", meaning that after a certain period of exposure, data will be deleted. Then, if this isn't enough, a charge per Mb upload. Therefore, it won't be the most important data to make it online, but those (such as a video of a lady playing with her cat) uploaded by users who can pay for it, in accordance with the "shopkeeper's guideline": "Keep increasing the cost as my customers increase. If the customers decrease, so be it, as long as there are enough to increment my profits."

Clearly there needs to be a broad criterion for quality that allows the elimination of large amounts of junk and to store only what really can be useful, otherwise our civilization will not be worth being commemorated for posterity as one that was able to choose and preserve the best of its intellectual works.

We must ask ourselves: "Is the video of the lady playing with her cat truly more important than an intellectual achievement?"