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COURSE: Youth & Cyberculture S6 / Spring 2020

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Some Major Terms

Cyber : a prefix used in a growing number of words to describe anything related to computers, the Internet and virtual reality, such as **cyberculture** (the emerging culture of those who are networked in cyberspace), **cyberspace** (the non-physical terrain created by computer systems, computer networks, or virtual space), **cyberpunk** (a genre of science fiction that draws heavily on computer science ideas), **cyberbullying** (online harassment ; the **cyberbully** is the person responsible for the acts of cyberbullying), **cybernaut** (a playful combination of the words "cyber" and "astronaut", meaning a person who travels in cyberspace ; a person who uses computers to communicate), **cyberzine** (an online magazine) ; **cybercrime** (a criminal activity conducted using computers and the Internet often financially motivated ; cybercrime includes **identity theft**, fraud, and internet scams, among other activities).

Cyber (adj.): the cyber age, the cyber marketplace.

Synonyms: electronic, digital, virtual.

Cyberculture: it is a way of thinking about how people and digital technologies interact; it also refers to ways of life shaped by cyber interaction and communication. There are two types of cyberculture : (1) **Hacking** and the **cyberpunk** as subcultures have originated in cyberspace, because both hackers and the cyberpunks are computer-related ; hackers break computer codes to access protected and secured information, while cyberpunks are writings of science fiction that deal with the digital world of **cyborgs**, artificial intelligence and cybercrime. Hacking and cyberpunk cultures are specific techno-cultures. (2) The second type of cyberculture involves all the other activities online including chatting, messaging, communicating, as well as using social media like Facebook and You Tube to create user-generated cultural content ; in this second sense, the Internet is seen to offer new interactive and participatory platforms for the development and enhancement of ways of our everyday lives.

In addition to these two forms of cyberculture, we may add two more categories: Representations of the Internet and studies about the digital world. Representations of the Internet include the different ways in which the Internet and interaction online are depicted in stories, narratives, films, videos, comedies and other creative forms of cultural production; studies about the digital world concern all the academic and research work that has been done

in this area: books, journal articles, conferences and courses that deal with how people and digital technologies interact.

Cyberspace: The term 'cyberspace' was first coined by the writer William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer* (1984), where he described it as a 'graphic representation of data abstracted from the bank of every computer in the human system.' Cyberspace is the space created through the confluence of electronic communications networks such as the Internet which enables **computer mediated communication** (CMC) between any number of people who may be geographically dispersed around the globe. It is a public space where individuals can meet, exchange ideas, share information, provide social support, conduct business, create artistic media, play simulation games or engage in political discussion.

Internet (the Net): It is the global system of interconnected computer networks that use the Internet protocol code (TCP/IP) to link digital devices (computers, smart phones, etc) worldwide.

WWW: The World Wide Web or just the Web is a vast collection of hypertext documents that are accessible via the Internet, allowing hypertext surfing.

The Web's hypertext transfer protocol (**HTTP**) has facilitated Internet traffic. The importance of the Web is clear from **Social networks** (Facebook and Twitter, Google, Wikipedia, blogs, and so on), the **streaming of video** (YouTube, DailyMotion, Hulu, and Netflix), and the **cyberlockers**: Web-based file hosting sites such as **Rapidshare**, **MegaUpload**, **4Shared,** and **Hotfile** which, **like P2P,** are also used to share movies, TV shows, and music albums.

HTML (Hyper Text Marup Language): It is the computer language that enables the display of information on a website as hypertext and hypermedia. HTML is a **markup language** rather than a programming language and makes use of **HTML tags** to structure the content of your web pages.

Website: A site (location) on the world wide web. Each website contains a home page, which is the first document users see when they enter the site. The site might also contain additional documents and files. Each site is owned and managed by an individual, company or organization.

The Difference Between the Internet and World Wide Web

Many people use the terms 'Internet' and 'World Wide Web' (the Web) interchangeably, but in fact the two terms are not synonymous. The Internet and the Web are two separate but related things. The internet is a massive network of networks, a networking infrastructure. It is a global network connecting millions of computers. The World Wide Web, or simply the Web, is a way of accessing information over the medium of the internet. The web uses the HTTP protocol to transmit data. The web also utilizes browsers, such as Internet Explorer or Firefox, to access Web documents called webpages that are linked to each other via hyperlinks. Web documents contain graphics, sounds, text and video.

The web is just one of the ways that information can be disseminated over the internet. The internet, not the web, is also used for email, which relies on SMTP, Usenet news groups, instant messaging and FTP. So the web is just a portion of the Internet, albeit a large portion, but the two terms are not synonymous and should not be confused.

Wiki: Wiki is a type of server application that allows people to create and edit web page content using web browsers (IE, google chrome, Opera, etc.). Wiki websites are a good example of how cyberspace is interactive—anyone anywhere can individually contribute to the growing literature that is available at a wiki site.

Hypertext: Hypertext is different from traditional written text, because it is multi-linear and multi-sequential; it does not follow any logical order or sequence. Hypertext links entries or pages back and forth to one another. The reader can skim through or hop around, choosing what information to read. New outlets, research portals and social media sites all have hypertextual links sprinkled in their web pages (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram use **hashtags** to make links).

Electronic Frontier: This is a term commonly used to refer to cyberspace. Because of its analogy to the virgin 'wild west frontier' of nineteenth-century America with its associated characteristics of lawlessness, freedom of identity and individual success, the electronic frontier casts the Internet as a medium for self-empowerment, opportunity and individual liberty.

Digital divide: The term 'digital divide' refers to the various forms of division between people who have access to the Internet and those who do not. The digital divide is a major cause for concern both within societies and between different countries and global regions.

Troll, V.: (internet slang) (to post inflammatory material so as) to attempt to lure others into combative argument for purposes of personal entertainment and/or gratuitous disruption, especially in an online community or discussion.

Troll, n.: (colloquial) A person who provokes others (chiefly on the Internet) for their own personal amusement or to cause disruption.

Meme: (Internet, slang) Something that is copied and circulated online with slight adaptions, including quizzes, basic pictures, video templates etc. A meme can be a photo or artwork, usually with text, often codified with a distinct white block lettering text on the image. If a particular, standardized image is used, there is a protocol to how it should be used.

Cyborg

The word cyborg is short for 'cybernetic organism', signaling a hybrid of organic life with cybertechnology. American theorist Donna Haraway, whose essay 'A Cyborg Manifesto', first published in the mid-1980s, remains the most significant discussion of the many forms and uses of the cyborg:

A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of science fiction…[W] e are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism. In short, we are all cyborgs.

Haraway's definition expands our ways of thinking about the prostheticization of the body in cyberculture, the fusion of nature and technology and proliferating cybernetic organisms.