A Case for Knowledge Commons

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Contents

1 Introduction: Knowledge – commodity or commons?

- Knowledge escapes being a commodity, since there is no scarcity as with material goods; after use knowledge is not used up
- ICTs allow to copy intellectual property with diminishing costs
- Knowledge economy is a commons economy (André Gorz). Science is communism (Robert K. Merton)
- Commodification produces artificial scarcity to yield exchange value

2 The necessity of knowledge commons

2.1 Point of departure: Global challenges

- are complex in nature
- need thinking in complexity
- reveal the whole world is made up of complex systems organising themselves on different levels
- discard simple solutions

2.1 Point of departure: Global challenges

=def. disparities

- in human-human relations;
- in human-nature relations;
- in human-technology relations;

that reinforce each other such that

- the survival of humanity is put at stake
- a single integrated effort by all the humanity is needed in order to cope with them

2.1 Point of departure: Global challenges

Times of crises mark a decision window:

- either breakdown
- or breakthrough to a higher level of organisation of the world system

2.2 Vision: Global Sustainable Information Society

Globality =def.

- in an objective sense: interdependence of societies such that social actions yield spatiotemporal effects on a planetary scale
- in a subjective sense: the code of conduct reflects the increased vulnerability

2.2 Vision: Global Sustainable Information Society

Sustainability =def.

- on the social level: social compatibility (justice, inclusion), that is,
  - on the cultural level: equality;
  - on the political level: freedom;
  - on the economic level: solidarity;
- on the ecological level: ecological compatibility;
- on the technological level: technological compatibility

2.2 Vision: Global Sustainable Information Society

Informationality =def.

mode of reproduction of society based upon that amount of collective intelligence that is required for making society sustainable
(„intelligent design“ of social systems)

Collective intelligence =def.

- problem-solving capacity of a system
- that supersedes the ones of each single component

2.2 Vision: Global Sustainable Information Society

=def. Society

- that successfully reorganised itself on a planetary scale
- to cope with the challenges originating in its own development
- by taking advantage of ICTs (computer, Internet) for enhancing new ways of knowledge processes

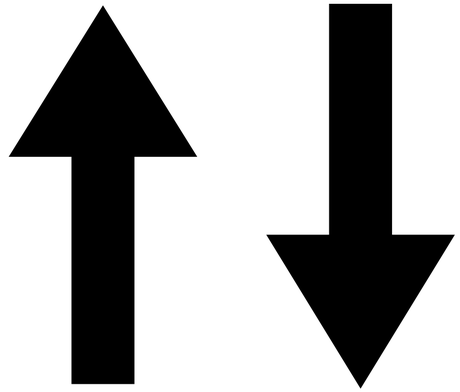
2.3 Way:
Making knowledge a commons

In order to be able to harness collective intelligence for the coping with gobal challenges knowledge has to become a commons

2.3 Way:
Making knowledge a commons

MACRO-LEVEL:
SOCIETY

Production of material and immaterial goods



Provision of material and immaterial goods

MICRO-LEVEL:
INDIVIDUALS

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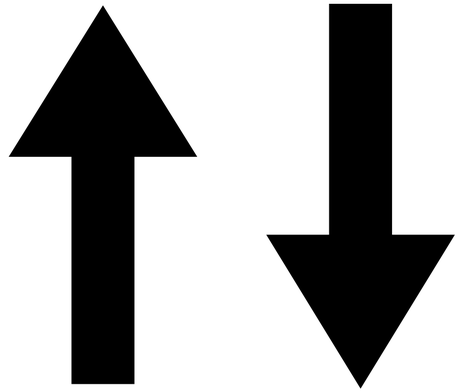
2.3 Way:
Making knowledge a commons

MACRO-LEVEL:
SOCIETY

Creation of knowledge



Provision of open access to knowledge

MICRO-LEVEL:
INDIVIDUALS

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2.3 Way:
Making knowledge a commons

Informatisation =def. diffusion of ICTs

Informationalisation =def. change the basis of social information processes

Informatisation has to serve informationalisation:

- Shaping ICTs for a Global Sustainable Information Society!

3 Conclusion: Integrative ICT Assessment and Design

=def. Design of both

- technological applications and
- social settings

based upon

- empirical assessment

which, in turn, grounds on

- theoretical considerations

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