Technology, Philosophy and Religion: why the anxiety?
February 2012

David Lewin and James Heartfield introduced a discussion on how technology is discussed across society

The public's use of the internet is causing many liberals some anxiety. Our unfettered access to it has made some begin to question whether all this communication and networking is entirely a good thing—especially when it takes place out of view from officialdom.

In the past, governments have always been exponents of censoring, regulating and questioning merits of access to content including pornography to hate-speech. But now, more and more liberals are themselves questioning the effects of technologies being deployed in wider civil society from unfettered access to the internet through road building, house building to genetic modifications of food.

Beyond the new technologies of the internet, many existing technologies are being questioned in a way that seems to suggest that the progress society has made to date, probably shouldn't be enjoyed or celebrated like it was in the heyday of the 60's. Shale gas fracking, for example, is the focus for the most recent public criticisms and campaigns by self-appointed saviours of society from itself, and our own insatiable quest for more.

So is something really going so wrong with the iPod clasping generation or is society losing faith in its own capacity or desire to control nature? This discussion will aim to draw out what our current relationship with technology tells us about the direction society is heading in, and how technology can help it resolve problems along the way.

Some background readings

Brendan O'Neill on new technology - IQ2 debate , by Brendan O'Neill YouTube August 2011

Why we must remember to delete – and forget – in the digital age , by Stuart Jeffries Guardian 30 June 2011

A Silicon Valley School That Doesn't Compute , by MATT RICHTEL New York Times 22 October 2011

Shale gas drilling's dirty secret is out , by Josh Fox, Guardian 09 December 2011

Technology and the Philosophy of Religion , reviewed by Charles Brickdale January 2012

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Speaker intros (David Lewin first) and full discussion in one go - click on the Play button:
{mp3}technology-philosophy-religion{/mp3}

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