

‘The Oculus Rift Economy – Agnotology or Flawed Paradigm’

Where might the truth be found?

The Researchers Quest

What do I need to know?

How far and wide should I look for information?

How certain can I be about the accuracy of any information?

Might there be a hidden agenda or political context which is obscuring what I need to know?

Is Agnotology at work here?



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Robert Neel Proctor (born 1954) is an American historian of science and Professor of the History of Science at Stanford University.

He first used the term "agnotology" to describe the study of culturally induced ignorance or doubt, particularly the publication of inaccurate or misleading scientific data.

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Clive Thompson wrote an excellent article (January 2009 – WIRED) entitled:

How More Info Leads to Less Knowledge

“Proctor points out that when it comes to many contentious subjects, our usual relationship to information is reversed: Ignorance increases”



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As Proctor argues, when society doesn't know something, it's often because special interests work hard to create confusion.

The oil and auto industries carefully seed doubt about the causes of global warming. And when the dust settles, society knows less than it did before.

The Researchers Quest

"People always assume that if someone doesn't know something, it's because they haven't paid attention or haven't yet figured it out," Proctor says. "But ignorance also comes from people literally suppressing truth—or drowning it out—or trying to make it so confusing that people stop caring about what's true and what's not."



The Researchers Quest

Perhaps there is a disinformation revolution borne out of a desire to conduct an agnotological campaign to manipulate how people think?

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Maybe the Internet itself has inherently agnotological side effects.

When bloggers or talking heads actually engage in debate, it often consists of pelting one another with mutually contradictory studies they've Googled: "Greenland's ice shield is melting 10 years ahead of schedule!" vs. "The sun is cooling down and Earth is getting colder!"

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As Farhad Manjoo notes in:

”True Enough: Learning to Live in a Post-Fact Society”

if we argue about what a fact means, we're having a debate. If we argue about what the facts are, it's agnotological Armageddon, where reality dies screaming.

The Researchers Quest



Truthiness is tearing apart our country, and I don't mean the argument over who came up with the word. I don't know whether it's a new thing, but it's certainly a current thing, in that it doesn't seem to matter what facts are. It used to be, everyone was entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. But that's not the case anymore. Facts matter not at all. Perception is everything.

(Stephen Colbert)

izquotes.com

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Whenever we make a choice, we're making a decision to trust in a particularized way..... Navigating the internet of information requires forming bonds with those who are “going the same way” and rejecting those who see things differently.

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Choosing means trusting some people and distrusting the rest.

CHOOSE WISELY



The Myth of Barter

What is 'Barter'

Barter is the act of trading goods and services between two or more parties without the use of money.

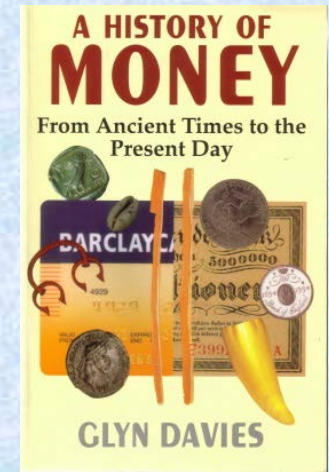
The earliest forms of commerce and trade was through barter, an activity of simply trading goods or services directly, without any intermediary 'medium of exchange'. In small villages or tribes, with limited specialization of production and similar needs and wants, this was an acceptable approach.

The Myth of Barter

“No example of a barter economy, pure and simple, has ever been described, let alone the emergence from it of money; all available ethnography suggests that there never has been such a thing.”

Caroline Humphrey, 1985.

The Myth of Barter



Davies (2002) concludes:

"the overwhelming tangible evidence of actual types of primitive moneys from all over the world and from the archaeological, literary and linguistic evidence of the ancient world, is that barter was not the main factor in the origins and earliest developments of money."

VR

The term “virtual reality” (VR) has been around for decades. It refers to technology that can immerse one into imaginary, yet lifelike, experiences.

Starting in the late 1980s, there was a growing interest in creating a more personal and immersive style of VR.

Science fiction quickly latched on the idea. In 1992, it inspired the sci-fi horror flick *The Lawnmower Man*, where VR headset-wearing test subjects are turned into evil geniuses. In 1999's, *The Matrix*, humans enslaved by machines and spending their entire lives living in a sort of virtual reality.

In the real world, however, the actual technology hasn't yet lived up to the hype. For years, VR headsets were bulky and uncomfortable, the graphics blocky and unconvincing, and the equipment required to generate these digital worlds took up a lot of space... and cost far more than consumers would be willing to spend.

VR

A VR environment could help speed 3-D modeling and design in engineering and creative applications.

VR simulators could also be used for skills training.

It's already been done for years in many areas using expensive tech. But cheap VR would make it available to everyone.

It could be used for Online learning; with innovators like Sal Khan at the Khan Academy or other free courses like those of MIT's MITx. But VR would make them even better?.

Imagine being able to talk to a virtual William Shakespeare... observe ultra-realistic dinosaurs in their native environment... explore King Tut's tomb, either as looked when it was rediscovered in the 1920s or as it appeared when he was first buried!

BUT IT IS NOT REALITY

The Oculus Rift Economy



Alex Schaefer, an Eagle Rock-based painter, started doing just that through painting banks on fire and selling them on eBay. Something about their shocking aesthetic and timely message had these radical pieces selling like wildfire. The painting of a burning Chase sold for \$25,200 (Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/11/accidental-political-arti_n_1088692.html)

The scene: A monetary policy forum at the International House in New York April 7th 2016

The players: The four living fed heads together on one stage: Yellen, Bernanke, Greenspan and Volcker



All were interviewed by CNN's Fareed Zakaria

From an Article in Daily Reckoning by [Peter Coyne](#) Posted April 8, 2016



“Are we in a bubble?” Zakaria asked, with his best straight face...

“I certainly wouldn’t describe this as a bubble economy,” Yellen answered. “This is an economy on a solid course.” Volcker saw some “overextended” prices, but confirmed.

“Is unemployment higher than the 5% you’ve been citing?” Zakaria followed up...

“Five percent is the most commonly used number,” replied Janet. “There are broader measures of unemployment... but by any metric, the labour market has drastically improved.”

“The domestic U.S. economy is moving forward,” Bernanke added. “I don’t see any particular reason to believe a recession is any more likely in 2016 than it was in 2015 or 2014.”

Greenspan copped out and babbled about “low productivity rates” for a while.

There was no mention of the squeeze they put on savers... the bubbles they blew... the windfalls they’ve given to speculators... or the fact that they were blindsided by the biggest economic crises of their time.



Watching the Fed broadcast, one gets the impression that an economic recovery is in play... most people who want work are getting it... and the stock market is rising because everything's doing fine.

This world exists, but only **virtually**, in the minds of Janet, Ben, Alan and Paul.

Jim Rickards argues that leading economists, policymakers and pundits all operate under the same flawed “**paradigm**” or worldview. It's a kind of virtual reality. They see the economy as a machine that can be changed according to government's orders. Unlimited credit is the fuel that greases the wheels.

There is an whole system that thrives on this shared fantasy. Corporations, banks, academia, the military, bureaucracies, people on welfare, foreign governments, Wall Street, the media, our health care system — all of them have a financial stake in keeping this fantasy going. All thrive on government regulation and cheap credit.

How to know if the people operating under this **paradigm** actually believe in their **virtual reality**... or if they just quietly play along because calling it bogus would be too damning to their way of life. Like burning down your own house.

Paradigms have a shelf life. And this one's reached its limits. The amount of growth generated by manipulating people and money has diminished too much.

Today, it takes \$3.71 in debt to generate \$1 of growth. The simple maths of this makes no sense. And it can't continue forever. The system is inevitably going to collapse under its own weight.

Killing the Nation-State

As the current system collapses, government and those who benefit the most from it will revolt... and try to tighten their grip as much as they can.

This why there is a war on cash... negative interest rates... and the use of the Panama Papers to try to bring offshore funds under the control of the tax man. Governments are walling in their citizens and their money so they have a honey pot to keep their racket going.

Austerity



Anti-austerity rally
in Valencia, Spain



Tightening the belt -
A metaphor or a
euphemism?



Too Big To Jail



Rolling Stone journalist Matt Taibbi called Goldman Sachs “a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money.” This cartoon accompanies his more recent article, 'Too Big to Jail'.

What's wrong with economics?



Slide courtesy Bendell, J and M. Slater (2015) Money and Society, free course, www.iflas.info

Killing the Nation-State

“The real issue is control,” wrote Grateful Dead lyricist John Perry Barlow. “The Internet is too widespread to be easily dominated by any single government. By creating a seamless global economic zone, anti-sovereign and unregulatable,” in a few words, technology like virtual reality “calls into the question the very idea of a nation-state.”

Killing the Nation-State

Information technology like the Internet, encryption technology, 3-D printing, private currencies, and now virtual reality will offer a way for you to circumvent this lockdown.



PESTLE Analysis

P – Political

E – Economic

S – Social

T – Technological

E – Environmental

L – Legal

SWOT Analysis

S – Strengths

W – Weaknesses

O – Opportunities

T – Threats

THE FIVE P's

For a Research and Innovation Context, consider the following:-

P

P

P

P

P

THE FIVE P's

P – PLAUSIBLE

Does it sound reasonable – is it something I might be interested in?

THE FIVE P's

P – POSSIBLE

Is it theoretically possible? – either an Invention or a Theorem *i.e.* possible in the context we are considering

THE FIVE P's

P – PRACTICABLE

Can it be made, modelled or theorised?

THE FIVE P's

P – PROFITABLE

Is there any advantage; economic, social or otherwise? *i.e.* can 'we' derive any benefit?

THE FIVE P's

P – PRESENT

Does it exist somewhere already, and if so at what stage is it?

THE FIVE P's

**Plausible
Possible
Practicable
Profitable
Present**

Final thoughts



<http://dailyreckoning.com/brain-dead-zombies-and-lawless-psychopaths/>

Final thoughts

There are no facts, only interpretations.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Orthodoxy is the diehard of the world of thought. It learns not, neither can it forget.

Aldous Huxley

Reserve your right to think, for even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all. Hypatia

The most important thing
these days might just be
knowing what we
know.....



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