

**Media Lab Europe**  
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ICT and Education:  
**INCREMENTAL PROGRESS OR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE?**

Discussion group: **SOCIETY**

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Hi, everyone, my name is Barbara Barry, I'm from the MIT Media Lab. I'm a Ph.D. student in Glorianna Davenport's group, Interactive Cinema, and I was in the group called Society, and here are the other members of the group: Mark Spaniol from Abden University, Niall Winters from IoE University of London), Ray Poulin from University of Maine, Ben Gammon from the Science Museum, Costas Tsolakidis from the University of the Aegean, Gavin Dykes from DFICT, and Joe Butler from Intel. I noticed that there was a table with no women so I went there because the group was called Society and I didn't want a society that didn't have any women in it. And they welcomed me heartily and let me come up here and report on the group. So I wanted to give just a few of my impressions, a few of the stories and images that were brought up during the discussion and then maybe link them to some of the questions that we had afterwards.

So, imagine that there are a vast number of people on the Internet, all outputting, everybody is putting something out there – so there is this globalised graffiti, a mass of information. How does someone make a choice, how do they be critical when they are looking at that, and how do they find what they need?

The next story, imagine you are on the Internet or any other network place, and you find an interesting new computer language, and you start to use it, a programming

language – you build something. You email the person who invented the language to ask them a few questions because you're not sure, and you make an assumption about how old they are and later you find out that it's a 14-year-old who has made this really complex language that you've been using. So we talked a lot about shifting roles and learners and teachers and ages and mixing ages and just expectations we set about who the learner is.

The next little story: imagine a teacher maybe 50 years ago or so, going into a library and saying, well – looking at the shelves, and saying well, I can probably read about this many books this year. So just sizing up how much information can we take in as a person, as a learner – what does that look like. Imagine a town in Greece where technology is everywhere, everyone has cell phones, PDAs, the school is the only place where there is no technology or technology that we don't associate with computers – so there are issues about accessibility and how we make those decisions.

Imagine someone 100 years ago driving a car for 20 miles and then the next day they imagine what it's like to drive a car 20 miles in a different direction. So technology helps us think differently about where we can go. Imagine someone going to a dressmaker or a tailor and ordering a suit and the tailor measures them and puts the suit on. What is personalised learning? Are there many tailors that help make this suit, and how do we think about that? And people from the group can chime in at any time.

What is my next one? Oh, this is a great one. Imagine that a principal goes to a school and asks for the newest cutting-edge technology that they have heard of, and the company says, "Oh, no, we don't install that in schools and we don't give it to individuals". They are turned away. Imagine a conversation about education where no one used the word computer, or that instead they used one attribute of the computer, one ability of it instead of using the term for the machine. Imagine people going to an exhibition and at the end having a trace of what their questions were, what their experience was at the end of that experience.

And so I'm going to read our list of questions:

How can technology enhance our ability to listen, not only our ability to speak?

To what extent does many, many technologies shape or alter the nature of minor and major political activities and relationships?

Will there be a significant shift in the relationship between the teacher and the student? How can computer technology keep a learner from getting stuck?

What kinds of thinking can be displaced onto a computer?

What kind of language do we need to search for the material and information that we need?

Are there specific languages we need to know in order to find something out?

What constitutes mentoring? Can technology have a role in that? (And a little side discussion about can technology replace that, which was a very heated discussion.)

What kind of student/teacher relationships can be discovered and established using computer technology?

To what extent is educational change emergent if we just put the technology in there do things happen or do we have to direct that, or is that necessarily directed?

Should the responsibility for content provision be displaced from the teacher onto the computer, allowing the teacher to concentrate on fostering affective leaning?