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Editorial

The Future Internet

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In 1995 technology analyst Gartner [1] developed a hype cycle model for the adoption of technology. The cycle comprises five stages from the initial technology trigger through to a final plateau of productivity along a with a peak of inflated expectations, a tough of disillusionment and the slope of enlightenment. The hype cycle is notable technique for plotting and identifying waves of innovation and hype in technology and digital communications. Yet, from where we stand, we can see the waves of innovation becoming increasingly shorter, the troughs less deep and the peaks of expectations higher. The read-write revolution, that is arguably known as Web 2.0, has transformed our experience of using the Internet from a source of information to a means of communication and participation. It has introduced mirror worlds, the cloud, wikitecture, social shaping, connected places, folksonomies and many other terms that I am sure many of us have used in recent grant applications and papers. This is the here and now, all of these technologies are past the technology trigger point and rising up the peak of inflated expectations with a few already heading towards the trough before becoming mainstream and approaching mass adoption.

The future of the Internet is open to debate, with services such as Twitter coming out of left field and quickly rising to become a global phenomena within a short period of time it is arguable that only the near horizon is a known. This makes the field of study all the more dynamic, perhaps one of the most intriguing current developments is the spread of the Internet from its traditional home of the computer or mobile device and into general ‘connected objects’ within the emerging technical and cultural phenomenon known as ‘The Internet of Things’. The term is attributed to the Auto-ID research group [2] at MIT in 1999, and was explored in depth by the International Telecommunication Union who published a report [3] bearing the same name at the United Nations net summit in 2005. The term, ‘Internet of things’, refers to the technical and cultural shift that is anticipated as society moves to a ubiquitous form of computing in which every device is ‘on’, and every device is connected in some way to the Internet. The Internet of things and the resulting smart objects are moving beyond the technology trigger, indeed we have just started working on a joint project with five other centres to

provide everyday objects with links to Web 2.0 technologies. With every shortening development cycles expect to see a paper in this journal on the matter within the next few months.

Academic publishing has traditionally been via paper-based journals with papers taking anything up to a year plus to appear in print. While maintaining the highest standards of peer review Future Internet aims to bring together the most innovative and notable papers within a short turnaround period. Papers will be published as soon as they have cleared review, creating a unique space in which the latest trends and technology triggers can be explored and discussed within an advanced forum for scientific studies related to Internet technologies and the information society. Our aim is to encourage scientists to publish their experimental and theoretical results in as much detail as possible. Therefore, there is no restriction on the length of the papers or the use of color figures.

The Pew Internet and American Life Project [4] recently interviewed 742 industry leaders on the effect of the Internet on social, political and economic life in the year 2020. While the broad developments of low cost mass connectivity and an increasingly wired society were widely agreed upon, the social and political impact of these technological changes is subject to much debate. This is why timely discussion is needed on e-government, the information society, web based services, file formats, mirror words, protocols and other such topics relating to the future of the Internet, the technology involved as well as its social and political impacts. As we move towards a read-write-execute web with operating systems becoming increasingly based around the browser and applications moving into the cloud, there has never been a better time to explore the future of the Internet. As such I am delighted to introduce this much-needed journal to the Internet research community and welcome your responses and submissions. The Editorial Board is committed to making this online journal a success, and we look forward to receiving your contributions, these are exciting times, the peaks of expectations for Internet driven technologies have never been higher.

References and Notes

1. For full details on Gartner Hype Cycle, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hype_cycle.
2. Auto-ID Research Group, http://autoid.mit.edu/CS/.
3. Internet Telecommunication Union, ITU Internet Reports 2005: The Internet of Things, http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/publications/Internetofthings/, 2005.
4. Rainie, L.; The Future of the Internet II, Pew Internet and American Life Project; http://www.pewInternet.org/Reports/2006/The-Future-of-the-Internet-II.aspx, 2006.