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The state of trust – and its future

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Imagining the Internet | A HISTORY AND FORECAST

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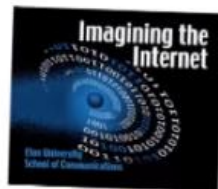
The Future of the Internet

Experts and stakeholders say the Internet will enhance our intelligence – not make us stupid. It will also change the functions of reading and writing and be built around still-unanticipated gadgetry and applications. The battle over control of the Internet will rage on and debates about online anonymity will persist.

Janna Quitney Anderson, Elon University
Lee Rainie, Pew Internet & American Life Project

'Future of the Internet' Surveys Raise Issues

Elon University and Pew Internet Project researchers conduct biennial surveys, asking leaders to share their expectations for the future. They are offered a series of predictions to which they respond with richly detailed elaborations on the opportunities and challenges emerging at this time of accelerating change.

Read more

VIEWING: ● ● ● ●

"Virtual communities could help citizens revitalize democracy, or they could be luring us into an attractively packaged substitute for democratic discourse." – Howard Rheingold

"The struggle will not be over mechanical control of the means of information, but over spin-control of the zeitgeist." – Bruce Sterling

"We're going to have to look at information as if we'd never seen the stuff before... The economy of the future will be built on relationship rather than possession." – John Perry Barlow

"I had (and still have) a dream that the Web could be less of a television channel and more of an interactive sea of shared knowledge." – Tim Berners-Lee

"Creators will have to fight to attract attention and get paid. Creativity will proliferate, but quality will be scarce and hard to recognize." – Esther Dyson

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REPORT

DECEMBER 10, 2018

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humans

Experts say the rise of artificial intelligence will make most people better off over the next decade, but many have concerns about how advances in AI will affect what it means to be human, to be productive and to exercise free will

REPORT MATERIALS

Complete Report PDF

Shareable quotes from experts about artificial intelligence and the future of humans

Data Labs

Data science at Pew Research Center

Greatest hits

- Rise of cyber attacks
- Shift to mobile
- Advent of filter bubbles
- Growing concern about privacy and surveillance
- Destroyed boundary between home and work
- Growth of fringe groups
- Rise of crypto-currencies
- Decline of appointment TV / rise of streaming
- Rise of virtual and augmented reality
- Mixed social impact – tolerance, human clashes
- Minimal / modest impact on education and health care

The future of trust

Billions of people use cellphones and the internet now, and hundreds of millions more are expected to come online in the next decade. At the same time, more than half of those who use the internet and cellphones still do not use that connectivity for shopping, banking, other important transactions and key social interactions. As more people move online globally, both opportunities and threats grow...

Will people's trust in their online interactions, their work, shopping, social connections, pursuit of knowledge and other activities be strengthened or diminished over the next 10 years?

Trust will be strengthened – 48%

Trust will stay the same – 28%

Trust will be diminished – 24%

Themes

1) Trust will strengthen because systems will improve and people will adapt to them and more broadly embrace them

Improved technology plus regulatory and industry changes will help increase trust

The younger generation and people whose lives rely on technology the most are the vanguard of those who most actively use it, and these groups will grow larger

2) The nature of trust will become more fluid as technology embeds itself into human and organizational relationships

Trust will be dependent upon immediate context and applied differently in different circumstances

Trust is not binary or evenly distributed; there are different levels of it

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Themes

3) Trust will not grow, but technology usage will continue to rise as a 'new normal' sets in

The trust train has left the station; sacrifices tied to trust are a 'side effect of progress'

People often become attached to convenience and inured to risk

There will be no choice for users but to comply and hope for the best

4) Some say blockchain could help; some expect its value might be limited

5) Trust will diminish because the internet is not secure and powerful forces threaten individuals' rights

Corporate and government interests are not motivated to improve trust or protect the public

Criminal exploits will diminish trust

The future of connectivity in the age of cyberattacks

As billions more everyday objects are connected in the Internet of Things they are sending and receiving data that enhances local, national and global systems as well as individuals' lives. But such connectedness also creates exploitable vulnerabilities. As automobiles, medical devices, smart TVs, manufacturing equipment and other tools and infrastructure are networked, is it likely that attacks, hacks, or ransomware concerns in the next decade will cause significant numbers of people to decide to disconnect, or will the trend towards greater connectivity of objects and people continue unabated?

15% said "more will disconnect"

85% said "connection will continue unabated"

Themes

1) People crave connection and convenience, and a tech-linked world serves both goals well

2) Unplugging is nearly impossible now; in a decade it will be even more tougher

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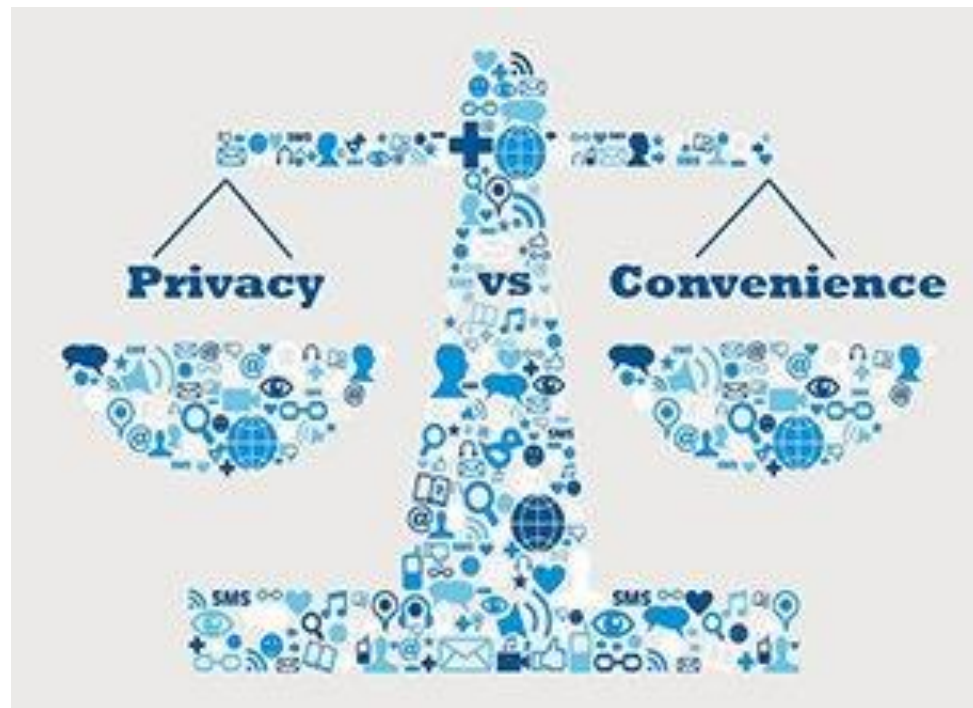
Themes

3) Risk is part of life. The Internet of Things will be accepted despite dangers because most people believe the worst-case scenario would never happen to them

4) Human ingenuity and risk-mitigation strategies will make the Internet of Things safer

Themes

5) Notable numbers will disconnect

6) Whether or not people disconnect, the dangers are real. Security and privacy issues will be magnified to a great degree by the rapid rise of the Internet of Things

Pew Research trust insights

1. Trust is fractured.

2. Trust is not evenly distributed.

3. Trust, or the lack of it, is connected with political and social conflicts.

4. Measures of trust often illuminate other issues.

5. Trust is being reshaped by technology and "distributed trust" mediated by tech platforms is rising.

6. Declining trust in others may be tied to rising self-reliance.

7. Bots and algorithms now influence information flows. Deep fakes might even more affect trust.

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Thank you!

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Read the research**: www.pewinternet.org**
www.imaginingtheinternet.org