Reviewed by James J. Heiney (Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania)
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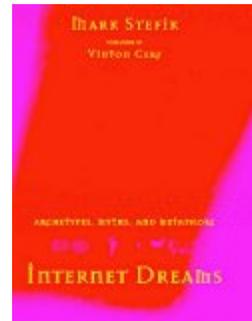
Many people see the Internet as a directionless, oftentimes confusing electronic time-waster more akin to a television than an invaluable resource. When drawn, the Internet is commonly represented as a nebulous cloud. With *Internet Dreams: Archetypes, Myths, and Metaphors*, Mark Stefik provides readers with observations and articles on what the Internet has already become as well as its potential to become a vital tool for society as a whole.

One of the problems he currently sees with the public perception of the Internet is the limiting metaphor of it as the "Information Highway." According to Stefik, "The metaphor has become so popular that it offers serious challenges to people talking about computer networks, because it carries with it misleading meanings associated with roads" (p. xix). He proceeds to clarify that the "Information Highway" metaphor is adequate to describe the flow of information but severely inadequate to direct us in how to utilize this information. Stefik provides us with alternatives to the highway metaphor with four others that he hopes will guide the shaping of the Internet. They are the Internet as the digital library, as electronic mail, as the electronic marketplace, and as digital worlds. He also relates each of these metaphors to the Jungian archetypes of the keeper of knowledge, the communicator, the trader/warrior, and the adventurer. Stefik argues that we see archetypes in ourselves and in others. The same way that archetypes can bring out the richness of ourselves, they can also guide us in laying the foundations for the Internet.

The book is divided into four sections each corresponding to one of Stefik's metaphors. Each supporting article is prefaced by Stefik and he follows each with his observations. The articles offer a wide range of views written by contributors such as Vinton Cerf, Harry Collins, Pavel Curtis, and Robert E. Kahn, to name a few.

Stefik leads off with the Digital Library metaphor which relates to the Keeper of Knowledge archetype. He states that the Internet can be more than a regular library. The Internet can store texts, programs, movies, and music which can be transmitted almost instantaneously. The interactive nature of the Internet can also allow on-line training to occur as well as performing non-informational functions like activity centers and community-oriented electronic displays. According to Stefik, the obstacles that must be overcome include a new digital literacy to be learned, improvement of the National Information Infrastructure (NII), and potential copyright problems. The section is well written with pertinent supporting articles.

Stefik's next section deals with electronic mail and the archetype of the communicator. He maintains that electronic mail not only increases the speed of communication but also serves a vital social purpose. Interest groups can be formed over vast distances into virtual communities and support groups. Many people such as scientists can organize around a common goal and, because of the speed and volume of input, they can attain the goal more quickly. Stefik also includes the possible downsides of the security of information and the possibility of people sending vicious e-mails back and forth. He recommends observing "netiquette" as a solution to this "flaming." Overall, the section is informative, although some of the supporting articles could have been replaced with others more geared toward the less technically inclined.

The third section concerns the Electronic Market-

place and is paralleled with the trader archetype and how vital the marketplace is to today's economy. On a personal level, Stefik contends that not only does the shopping experience provide us with a way to buy goods, it also provides us with a social experience. Buying goods could be more convenient because the market will come to our homes instead of driving to the market. We would also have our choice of a much larger range of products which could lower consumer costs. The social experience can be replicated on the Internet through chatting and multimedia technologies. On a larger scale, people can form "virtual corporations" on the Internet, employing people with targeted skills instead of having to hire and maintain a permanent staff. Small businesses could potentially compete with very large corporations due to the decreased overhead. Some items could also be purchased instantly over the Internet, such as texts and software. Copyright and security on the Internet are shown to be some of the stumbling blocks in the electronic marketplace. The supporting articles are very informative but the last in the section is painfully long and drawn out.

The final section is about Digital Worlds and how they appeal to the adventurer archetype which renews and refreshes us. The production of these digital worlds provides us with the sense of creation. People can have new identities which can break down communication barriers found in the real world, as shown in the articles on

"mudding." Collaborations can be formed for research purposes where people could use a virtual library and laboratory to reduce costs and time spent on a project. Stefik points out that current bandwidth in the National Information Infrastructure (NII) may not be sufficient to support some of these digital worlds. Another problem is that lowered inhibitions could lead to strife on the Internet and also that total immersion in the digital world may lead to a decreased ability to function in normal social situations. The articles in this section illuminate Stefik's premise very effectively.

This book presents us with views of the Internet that can lead even the most seasoned Internet user to discover new uses for this already invaluable tool. The book taken as a whole is well-written and informative despite a few supporting articles that may have been better chosen. Stefik states that if we follow these archetypes that can be found in almost all cultures, we will have the paths for the development of the Internet laid out for us. We will decide as a society what the Internet will become. In Mark Stefik's words, "In shaping what the Information Infrastructure will become, we are also choosing what we want to be" (p. xxiv).

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