

The Internet, Mobile Devices, and Social Media - Evolution or Devolution?

The positive possibilities are obvious: instant access to libraries of information at our fingertips and to improved long-distance, multi-part collaboration in science, education, and medicine. However, the Internet and the technologies of minimization and social interaction have now developed some worrisome aspects.

Recently, the Search Engine Manipulation Effect and other similarly sophisticated techniques have been identified (Epstein & Robertson, Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. 2015). The compulsive nature of cell phone use and social media have been documented (Gutierrez et al., Frontiers in Psychiatry, 2016, and Hawi & Samaha, Soc. Sci. Comp. Rev. 1-11, 2016). Issues like these affect the health of our children and of our society. We aim to provide useful information to help policy-makers do better.

Short talks by WESS members, including Gerald McLaughlin (NIH/NIDA), Ellen Wasserman (JHU), Andrew Vogt and Paul Kainen (Georgetown University)

WESS

The Washington Evolutionary Systems Society is a four-decade old organization of diverse professionals interested in evolving systems - biological, physical, and social. Ideas of Ilya Prigogine formed a central focus in early days and ongoing areas of study include complexity, emergence, and ecology.