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Throughout history disciplines of study and fields of research have faded away and emerged, due to constantly altering social/political context.

'The Missing islands' of Thematic networks may indicate such currents:

Post-modern condition - Globalization - Multiculturalism

Knowledge society - Information society - Network society

- Epistemological perspective
- Social/Cultural perspective
- Technological perspective
- Economic perspective

The new digital media are changing everyday life and education; it also creates emancipatory possibilities for society and individuals. Examples from histories of the Alphabet, Agriculture, Grand religions, the Printing press, the Monetary system, the Steam engine and the train, Universities and Public schooling, Radio and TV, Computer/Internet, the mobile phone, etc. indicate that **Globalization has always been around**

At each point in time Globalization seems to be the offspring of the intercourse of New Technologies and New Ideologies. Current wave of Globalization, though, suggests paradigmatic differences from previous ones. Facets of current Globalization can be traced in discourses of the new ICT and the new stage in Capitalism coined Neo-Liberalism

Constant reconstruction of communication technologies and infrastructure:

1800s: Transportation revolution

1900s: Broadcasting revolution

2000s: Telecommunication, Biotechnologies, etc.

Paul VIRILIO:

- Studying the reconstruction of time/space which is the foundation of modern theories of Quantum physics.
- New knowledge is eroding the modern conception of time and space; speed and light –
- The new ICT is reducing distance/space and
- minimizing time (simultaneous existence)

Manuel Castells:

- New technologies have always brought new possibilities, but they have also been met with scepticism and conservatism. The same goes for the new ICT in Academia
- The political location of the new technologies directs the social implication.
- *“There is something new in the information age. It can be empirically argued that at the source of productivity and competitiveness ..., there is the capacity to generate new knowledge and to process relevant information efficiently. To be sure, information and knowledge have always been essential factors in power and production.”*

New possibilities in education and culture are exciting; - also the new chaotic episteme growing in new virtual environments. We must reconsider education and research in the new cultural condition of the 21st century.

Can ICT be used to raise awareness of possibilities in regional development that combines the past, present and future of communities? Building up knowledge which is relevant for the local culture or community is the crucial task and could be aimed at with help of ICT.

“Our” role is to make models for that purpose. What are the implications of the technologies for culture and what are the implications of the culture for technologies?

ICT devices carry ideological dialectics of social, cultural and economic transformations. ICT is neither the cause nor effect of globalization. It is the very essence of the new world order.

An International Conference of the Arctic Council, Akureyri, Iceland, 20–21 October, 2003:

- It was highlighted that challenges in distance education are not primarily technological, but human.
- It is important not just to adjust education to new ICT, but to explore non-traditional use of technology -- to explore the possibilities of technologies in various cultures.
- Can the new ICT help us bring cultural values and humanness to distance education?
- We need to consider the educational processes and find tools to create dialogue and means of community support into rural education.
- Can Internet based pedagogy break isolation and bring human aspect into education across the Arctic Circle?

Where is the knowledge in knowledge society?

- Mass media
- Information technologies
- Neo-liberal ideology and forms of control

Are not only the form of education and research, but the essence of today’s education?

At the turn of the 21st century the ties between education and culture are still valid.

- Information is not the same as knowledge.
- Information is useless on her own; it has to be placed in a cultural context.
- It takes an educated mind and a thriving community to convert information into knowledge.

The role of education and research is changing in contemporary Western societies. From being a traditional academic exercise, education has evolved into more dynamic learning processes not necessarily taking place in traditional educational institutions. As a consequence of this development, one of the key questions in today is whether academics, as a collective, can create a sustained movement that turns ICT into locally grounded means for a cultural change.

How is the new social/cultural condition shaping education and research in the Humanities, Social Sciences and the Arts? How are the Humanities, Social Sciences and the Arts defining and constructing and reconstructing the new social/cultural condition in contemporary European societies?