



**Reality Computed:
On Media Convergence and Information Growth**

Prof. Jannis Kallinikos
London School of Economics
14th February 2008 (10am – 12 noon)
Vera Anstey Room, Old Building, LSE

Over the last two decades, there has been a spectacular growth of information, of all varieties and breeds. The informatized versions of the world technological information constructs impregnate the reality which people confront and are predicted to do so increasingly in the future, as individuals, empowered by strong computational artefacts, are becoming important consumers and producers of information. The processes of information growth are currently dimly understood. Aspects of the reality associated with current information growth dynamics can perhaps be explained by reference to particular settings and agent groups, yet the aggregate outcomes cannot. The performance is taking place with significant players but without a script and director.

The information mechanics that produce and to some degree define the current state of the world are closely related, I suggest, with the cognitive nature (a relation between conceptual or concept-based entities) and computational granularity (standardized and re-combinable data tokens, a deeper aspect of standardization) of technological information. Both these fundamental qualities combine to produce an interesting and counter-intuitive observation. Information is usually managed by constructing categories and classification schemes that enable inspection and control of available information, and by developing links and tags that allow the transition across information sources. Information reduction and management are furthermore accomplished through second order technologies, like data mining and profiling, and various forms of summarizing aggregate sources through the development of ratios, indices and the likes. However, ordering information and improving control and inspectability of available sources through the construction of categories, classification schemes, indices, ratios, etc, amount to producing new information. In this respect, all strategies of information reduction and management are caught in a double bind. Information-reduction strategies bite back. Being able to compare or relate categories and items leads to new information that re-enters and often dramatically expands the digitized, interoperable and converging circuits modern technology constructs.

Jannis Kallinikos is Professor and Research Chair in the Information Systems and Innovation Group, Department of Management, London School of Economics. Major research interests entail the study of the practices, technologies and formal languages by which organizations are rendered predictable and manageable and the modes by which current institutional and technological developments challenge the organizational forms that dominated modernity. Some of these themes are analyzed in detail in his recent book *The Consequences of Information: Institutional Implications of Technological Change*, Edward Elgar, 2006.

Please e-mail ComplexityGroup@lse.ac.uk to let us know you plan to attend the seminar.