

# S18929639\_Adrienne O Mahoney- Final Life Stream Summary, 22 March 2020

## Lifestream blog location

<http://edc20.education.ed.ac.uk/amahoney/>

**Wordcount;** 504 words excluding references.

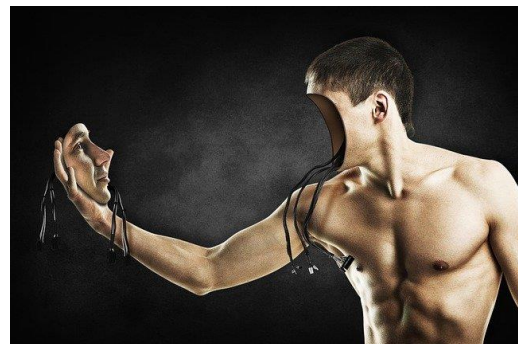
## Introduction

This life blog reflects a journey through the Education and Digital Cultures blocks:

- Block 1: Cyberculture (Weeks 1-3)
- Block 2: Community culture (Weeks 4-7)
- Block 3: Algorithmic culture (Weeks 8-10)

## Block 1: Cyberculture (Weeks 1-3)

Cyberculture considers ways in which popular culture drives our understanding of digital culture. We explored the influence of sci fi films and cyberculture on our assumptions about education. Sci fi movies often prove prescient in predicting the interplay of technology, society and education in the future. “When discussing technology, we’re not just talking about the benefits or disadvantages it brings to teaching and learning practices, but how technologies might be used, valued, imagined or represented by those involved.” Knox (2015).



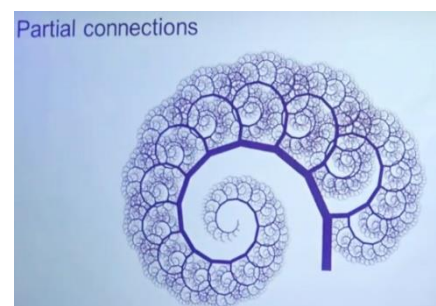
“The study of digital cultures can tease out some of the nuances and strangeness of culture, and bring to the fore some of the things we take for granted or may not be aware of”, Knox (2015)

Technology is one arm in a complex entanglement of human, social, technological. (Bayne 2015).

## Block 2: Community culture (Weeks 4-7)

We considered the concept of online community including benefits such as ‘status equalization effect’ – where age, sex, and race, cultural background are unknown in the online space (unless the user reveals them) resulting in more open communication and less dominance. Kozinets (2015).

Time and commitment around a central consumption activity help students move from the lurker status (where one has weaker skills, weaker social ties and superficial consumption), to an Insider’s strong social ties to the online community. (Kozinets 2010).



During my study of 'ethnography of a MOOC,' I found that it is difficult to adequately apply this type of developmental progression to students who are only temporarily part of the MOOC online learning community.

### Block 3: Algorithmic culture (Weeks 8-10)

Digital data & algorithms are informing contemporary culture within and beyond educational contexts. They are part of an "increased entanglement of agencies in the production of knowledge and culture" (Knox 2015). Therefore it is very hard to drill down to see who is managing or benefitting from the behavioural governance of these algorithms.

This is particularly pertinent to be careful of in education where algorithms are increasingly used to inform, nudge, shape & potentially influence young learners significantly.



### Conclusion

Technology can no longer be seen as the passive instrument of humans; it is used as an agent by humans and non humans to "nudge towards the predetermined path as designed by the algorithm" Knox et al 2020.

Information technology often presents itself as potentially liberating, when in fact our actual interactions with it often reinforce conventional social structures of domination, especially when we haven't engaged in an awareness of "**political agendas, entrepreneurial ambitions, philanthropic goals and professional knowledge to create new ways of understanding, imagining and intervening**" in our decision making (Williamson 2017)

Therefore we should maintain a critical perspective on algorithmic culture and continue to question the "objectivity and authority assumed of algorithms" (Knox 2015), and how they are shaping, categorising and privileging knowledge places, people and education.

### References

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