DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Social Precognition

Robert Dingwall

Nottingham Trent University

DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Framing the Future

When scientists develop a new technology, they tend to think that this is a genuine novelty, rolling out into a society that has never encountered anything like it before. Frequently, of course, they are surprised by the reaction: the technology has indeed been encountered before, in the imaginative worlds of that society as these have been conceived by creative artists. The world of the imagination is, however, the source of the interpretive frames that ordinary members of the society invoke to make sense of the new technology. A framing already exists before the technology comes into the world and shapes its entry and its reception.

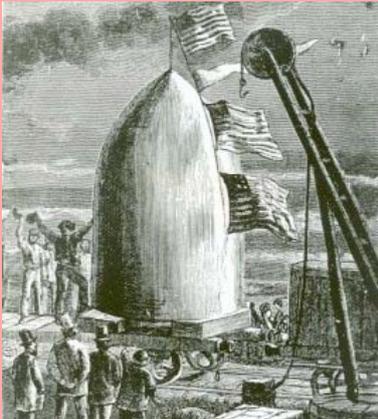DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Social Precognition

- **Contrary to what one might expect, popular culture does not follow and reflect science, it leads and anticipates.**

- **Popular culture talks about space-rockets before there are space-rockets-and clones before there are clones.**

- **So *when science does these things for real, their image has already been formed -for good or ill.***

- **Before scientists do anything there is often a ready made public perception of how good or how bad it is going to be, derived from this social, literary and cultural *precognition.* (Nerlich, 2001)**
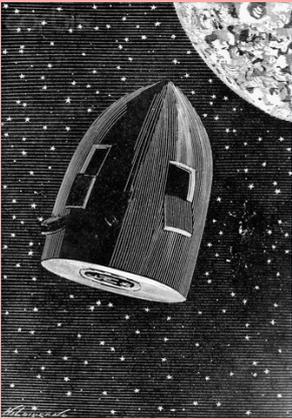
DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Social Precognition and Innovation

- **Can scientists and engineers discover or invent anything that has not been identified in the popular imagination?**

Dingwall Enterprises

Rockets to the Moon

Dingwall Enterprises

Landing Modules

DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Mobile Phones

DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Immortality

EXPLORING
LIFE EXTENSION

An Immortaltiy
Institute Film

Daring to go further - against
"compression of morbidity"
by Eric Schulke

DINGWALL ENTERPRISES
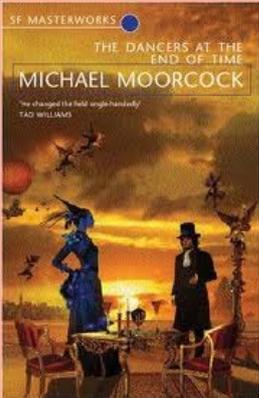
Fictional Computers

- Computers have often been used as fictional objects in literature, movies and in other forms of media. Fictional computers tend to be considerably more sophisticated than anything yet devised in the real world.

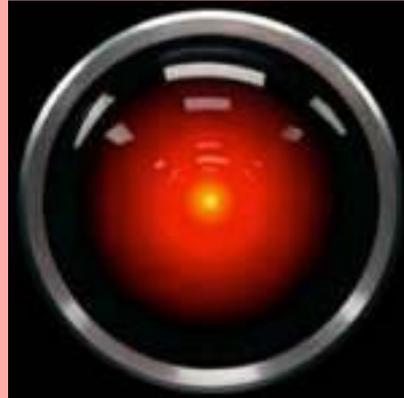*Wikipedia*

DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Gulliver's Travels (1726)

"... Every one knew how laborious the usual method is of attaining to arts and sciences; whereas, by his contrivance, the most ignorant person, at a reasonable charge, and with a little bodily labour, might write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, laws, mathematics, and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study." He then led me to the frame, about the sides, whereof all his pupils stood in ranks. It was twenty feet square, placed in the middle of the room. The superfices was composed of several bits of wood, about the bigness of a die, but some larger than others. They were all linked together by slender wires. These bits of wood were covered, on every square, with paper pasted on them; and on these papers were written all the words of their language, in their several moods, tenses, and declensions; but without any order. The professor then desired me "to observe; for he was going to set his engine at work." The pupils, at his command, took each of them hold of an iron handle, whereof there were forty fixed round the edges of the frame; and giving them a sudden turn, the whole disposition of the words was entirely changed. He then commanded six-and-thirty of the lads, to read the several lines softly, as they appeared upon the frame; and where they found three or four words together that might make part of a sentence, they dictated to the four remaining boys, who were scribes. This work was repeated three or four times, and at every turn, the engine was so contrived, that the words shifted into new places, as the square bits of wood moved upside down.

2001 A Space Odyssey (1968)

HAL is capable not only of speech, speech recognition, facial recognition, and natural language processing, but also lip reading, apparent art appreciation, interpreting and reproducing emotional behaviour, reasoning, and playing chess, in addition to maintaining all systems on an interplanetary mission.

Joke? Computers & Electronics in Movies

2. You never have to use the space-bar when typing long sentences.

4. High-tech computers, such as those used by NASA, the CIA, or some such governmental institution, will have easy to understand graphical interfaces. Those that don't, have incredibly powerful text-based command shells that can correctly understand and execute commands typed in plain English.

7. All computers are connected. You can access the information on the villain's desktop computer, even if it's turned off.

10. People typing away on a computer will turn it off without saving the data.

13. Complex calculations and loading of huge amounts of data will be accomplished in under three seconds. Movie modems usually appear to transmit data at the speed of two gigabytes per second.

16. No matter what kind of computer disk it is, it'll be readable by any system you put it into. All application software is usable by all computer platforms.

18. Most computers, no matter how small, have reality-defying three- dimensional, active animation, photo-realistic graphics capability.

19. Laptops, for some strange reason, always seem to have amazing real-time video phone capabilities and the performance of a CRAY Supercomputer.

DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

…and the moral is…

- Our literature reviews should not ignore literature.

(P.M. Strong 1983)

DINGWALL ENTERPRISES

Social Precognition

Robert Dingwall
Nottingham Trent University