

Predicting

“There has never been conceived or made by man any instrument, machine, or contrivance, capable of such a diversity of usefulness as the human hand. Nothing has ever existed with such infinite adaptability to various needs, or capable of being trained to such degrees of dexterity and versatility. Nor is it likely that as perfect a machine will ever be produced by human skill, for the only thing the human hand cannot do is to create an instrument as perfect as itself.”¹

“Increasingly, search is our mechanism for how we understand ourselves, our world, and our place within it. It's how we navigate the one infinite resource that drives human culture: knowledge.”²

“Through the actions we take in the digital world, we leave traces of our intent, and the more those traces become trails, the more strongly an engine might infer our intent given any particular query.”³

“The information appears relatively innocuous; some even take the stance that collection is harmless since they have nothing to hide.”⁴

“We use the information we collect from all of our services to provide, maintain, protect and improve them, to develop new ones... We also use this information to offer you tailored content...”⁵

“To do these things manifestly requires that we should have a correct estimate of the person with whom we are dealing.”⁶

“When you choose a search prediction, you do a search using that prediction as your search term... Search predictions aren't the answer to your search.”⁷

“You might imagine that a reading will always come true but in fact this isn't necessarily so... it may simply be that you've got things slightly wrong. It happens to everyone at some point.”⁸

“...we ask the world's most famous and dominant search engine how to sort out our lives. We in effect request guidance and wisdom from banks of servers – silicon chips with more in common with sand than humans.”⁹

“This artefact can tell us extraordinary things about who we are and what we want as a culture. And it has the potential to be abused in equally extraordinary fashion.”¹⁰

“From this point of view we can include a knowledge of the past, for we know what ancestors of the same type have always done; the present, for we know what the typical people always do; and the possible future, for we know what the outcome generally is.”¹¹

“Future generations will be able to trace our interests as a society just by looking at what we were looking for. Even if we don't find the information, it doesn't matter. Who we are, how we represent ourselves, how the world feeding back a mirror image of ourselves shapes our idea of ourselves – this is as old as philosophy, but today has a completely new twist.”¹²

“Google is the mothership and ideal type of a new economic logic based on fortune telling and selling, an ancient and eternally lucrative craft that has exploited the human confrontation with uncertainty from the beginning of the human story.”¹³

“We're trying to figure out what the future of search is...I actually think most people don't want Google to answer their questions...They want Google to tell them what they should be doing next.”¹⁴

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- ¹ William George, Benham, *The Laws of Scientific Hand Reading: A Practical Treatise on the Art Commonly Called Palmistry*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901) p v
- ² John, Battelle, *The Search: How Google and its rivals rewrote the rules of business and transformed our culture*, (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2007) p 280
- ³ John, Battelle, *The Search: How Google and its rivals rewrote the rules of business and transformed our culture*, (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2007) p 255
- ⁴ Michelle G., Hough, 'Keeping it to ourselves: Technology, privacy, and the loss of reserve', in *Technology in Society* 31 (4) (Elsevier) p 408
- ⁵ *Google Privacy and Terms website*, 'Welcome to the Google Privacy Policy', <<https://www.google.com/policies/privacy/>>, [accessed 1/12/16]
- ⁶ William George, Benham, *The Laws of Scientific Hand Reading: A Practical Treatise on the Art Commonly Called Palmistry*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901) p vii
- ⁷ *Google Support FAQ website*, 'Search using autocomplete', <<https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/106230?hl=en>>, [accessed 1/12/16]
- ⁸ Jane, Struthers, *The Fortune Teller's Bible*, (London: Godsfield, 2007) p 11
- ⁹ *The Spark Website*, 'Literally searching for answers by Andrew Webb', <<http://www.thespark.org.uk/literally-searching-answers/>>, [Accessed 1/12/16]
- ¹⁰ *John Battelle's Searchblog*, 'The Database of Intentions is Far Larger than I Thought' <http://battellemedia.com/archives/2010/03/the_database_of_intentions_is_far_larger_than_i_thought.php>, [Accessed 1/12/16]
- ¹¹ William George, Benham, *The Laws of Scientific Hand Reading: A Practical Treatise on the Art Commonly Called Palmistry*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901) p 5
- ¹² *Telegraph website*, 'Google's most popular questions' by Kate Bussmann, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/10981092/Googles-most-popular-questions.html>> [Accessed 2/12/16]
- ¹³ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung website*, 'Google as a Fortune Teller, The Secrets of Surveillance Capitalism by Shoshana Zuboff' <<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/the-digital-debate/shoshana-zuboff-secrets-of-surveillance-capitalism-14103616-p5.html>> [Accessed 2/12/16]
- ¹⁴ *The Wall Street Journal Website*, 'Google and the Search for the Future' by Holman W. Jenkins Jr. quoting Eric Schmidt <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704901104575423294099527212>> [Accessed 2/12/16]

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