

GIVING EVERYONE A “MILLION DOLLAR” EDUCATION

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By a million dollar education I mean the quality of education that would be obtainable if students had a million dollars to spend on conventional text books. The internet now allows books and journal articles to be downloaded for free using file sharing sites and the conversion of paper format documents into electronic format documents using scanners with optical character recognition software, so that later they can be searched electronically. Thus an educational revolution becomes possible whereby students around the world, with access to the internet can educate themselves by use of their own electronic libraries, that they can download for themselves and store on mass storage hard drives.

The only obstacle to this educational revolution is the opposition of the “Pluddites” (the paper luddites) who are leftovers from the paper era, in which they placed copyrights on the paper products (books and journal articles) they packaged and distributed. In the paper era, they performed a valuable service and the modern scientifically dominated world owes its existence to the paper publishers. But in today’s internet world with its cheap scanners, the copyrighted book or journal article is an albatross. Billions of people are now asking “Why should anyone be forced to pay \$50 for a single paper book, when they can download 50,000 such books for free from the internet?” The days of the Pluddite are numbered. Paper is dying. People can put a small library (e.g. 1000 books) on their iPads, and annotate them very effectively with the

appropriate software. Very soon, they will be able to cross reference such e-books and e-articles at speed, instead of having to carry around a pile of heavy paper books.

The “globacators” (global educators) who are dedicated to providing free education to the planet (thus creating a world wide educated middle class, which then pushes for democracy in dictatorial countries, and since advanced democracies do not go to war with each other, a globacated world would be a war free world) are severely handicapped in achieving their goal by the Pluddites, and are impatient to see them go bankrupt as paper products disappear, and hopefully the copyrights that accompany them.

Millions of FIMmers (members of the Free Information Movement) are waging a quiet war (the “Paper War”) against the Pluddites, by buying scanners and scanning books and journal articles and then uploading them to file sharing sites for other students to benefit from. The FIMmers do not feel “guilty” about breaking copyright in this fashion, a logic they reject as belonging to a bygone era – they feel they are on a moral crusade, in causing the bankruptcy of the Pluddites, who are seen as “keeping the world ignorant, and hence at war”. To the FIMmers, the cost-benefit argument is very strong. There will obviously be a cost to the Pluddites, namely their bankruptcy, so they will lose their livelihood, but the benefit to *billions* of people, by allowing them to obtain a high quality free education, is even more obvious. To the FIMmers, the Pluddites are criminals, who “imprison knowledge” and should be eliminated, by causing their companies to go bankrupt. With millions of FIMmers scanning paper documents into the global “educational library” there is no way the Pluddites can survive. Their demise is only a question of time.

Once the copyright system has disappeared, future academic authors will need to publish themselves and not depend on

publishing companies to do it for them. This will not be much of a change for them in financial terms (unless they write blockbuster 101 economic texts and the like) because most academic authors make very little money with their royalties, probably only a few hundred dollars per book and nothing at all on journal articles. I speak from my own experience here. An academic work, usually only sells a few thousand copies at best, so, unlike creators of pop music, movies, or journalistic articles, the loss of only a few hundred dollars will not phase the academics very much, and hence make the transition to free knowledge easier.

A strong moral value will come into being that information should be free, so that the planet can educate itself to a high degree, giving all students a “million dollar education.”

There are some two billion “hungry minds” who will benefit from such an education, so once they get the idea into their heads that the only thing preventing them from pulling themselves out of their “impoverished shithole” via free globacation is the copyright system on paper publications, they will become a “force of nature” i.e. unstoppable, in their global political opposition towards and hatred of the Pluddites. No politician could withstand their pressure, despise the howls of the Pluddites, whose death knell will be tolled.

The principal near future task of politicians around the world will be to foster globacation, because it will soon be seen as the essential means to raise peoples standard of living. Getting a good education is usually the quickest way to pull oneself out of an inferior economic situation into a middle class life style. Within a decade, billions of people will be clamoring for free globacation, so the politicians worldwide will have to listen, and the Pluddites, if they have any sense at all, will read the writing on the wall, and get out of their dying immoral profession, especially if they are relatively young.