

[T]he commands you type into a computer are a kind of speech that doesn't so much communicate as *make things happen*, directly and ineluctably, the same way pulling a trigger does. . . . And it's precisely this logic that provides the real magic in a place like LambdaMOO—not the fictive trappings of voodoo and shapeshifting and wizardry, but the conflation of speech and act that's inevitable in any computer-mediated world. . . . This is dangerous magic, to be sure a potential threat—if misconstrued or misapplied—to our always precarious freedoms of expression. . . .

Julian Dibbell, "A Rape in Cyberspace" 1993

Second, what we have at work in America today is the opposite of a Panopticon: what has been called a "Nonopticon" (for lack of a better word). The Nonopticon describes a state of being watched without knowing it, or at least the extent of it. The most pervasive surveillance does not reveal itself or remains completely clandestine (barring leaks to *The New York Times*). We don't know all the ways we are being recorded or profiled. We are not supposed to understand that we are the product of marketers as much as we are the market. And we are not supposed to consider the extent to which the state tracks our behavior and considers us all suspects in crimes yet to be imagined, let alone committed.

Siva Vaidhyanathan "Naked in the 'Nonopticon'" 2008

It is easy to become unsettled by privacy-eroding aspects of awareness tools. But there is another — quite different — result of all this incessant updating: a culture of people who know much more about themselves. Many of the avid Twitterers, Flickrers and Facebook users I interviewed described an unexpected side-effect of constant self-disclosure. The act of stopping several times a day to observe what you're feeling or thinking can become, after weeks and weeks, a sort of philosophical act. It's like the Greek dictum to "know thyself," or the therapeutic concept of mindfulness. (Indeed, the question that floats eternally at the top of Twitter's Web site — "What are you doing?" — can come to seem existentially freighted. What are you doing?) Having an audience can make the self-reflection even more acute, since, as my interviewees noted, they're trying to describe their activities in a way that is not only accurate but also interesting to others: the status update as a literary form.

Clive Thompson, "Brave New World of Digital Intimacy" 2008

In early September, Matthew Foremski, the 18-year-old son of a Silicon Valley tech reporter, dug up an old version of Rose's MySpace page. She'd deleted it when she became Bree, but Google cached a copy, and Foremski posted the link to his father's blog. Within 48 hours, *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and a slew of TV stations ran the story. The jig was up. Many assumed the series would sputter and die. Media reports zeroed in on how viewers had been duped, suggesting an inevitable backlash. But the fans — raised on the unreality of reality TV and with the role-playing ethos of the Web — seemed to take the revelation in stride. One guy who had corresponded regularly with Bree wrote to ask if he'd been conversing with Jessica Rose. "No, you've been talking to Bree," came the reply (from Amanda). "If you want to talk to Jessica Rose, you can go to her MySpace page. If you want to keep talking to Bree, use this email."

Joshua Davis, "The Secret World of Lonelygirl" 2006

What is being called "Internet plagiarism" is presently understood almost exclusively in terms of access to text with expanded access itself believed to be the primary cause of the phenomenon. The history of text, however, reveals that previous revolutions in access to text, such as those precipitated by the advent of the printing press and again by mass education, also incited cultural fears. This time, the cultural fears are focused on issues of property and especially on students' incursions on the words and ideas of others. If, however, we consider not just access to text but also textual relationships, we can gain a more tempered, critical understanding of Internet plagiarism.

Rebecca Moore Howard, "Understanding 'internet plagiarism'" 2007