

People and Technology (some connecting points)

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Commodity Fetishism, Alienation and Media

Guy Debord: *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967)

– media replace relations between people with relations between images – a philosophical thesis similar to empirical work of Reeves and Nass.

- Debord: "The alienation of the spectator to the profit of the contemplated object (which is the result of his own unconscious activity) is expressed in the following way: the more he contemplates the less he lives; the more he accepts recognizing himself in the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own existence and his own desires. The externality of the spectacle in relation to the active man appears in the fact that his own gestures are no longer his but those of another who represents them to him. This is why the spectator feels at home nowhere, because the spectacle is everywhere." (Thesis 30)

Jean Baudriallard: *Simulacra and Simulation*
(1985)

Capitalism and Innovation

- Incentive theory of intellectual property (copyright, patents, trademark) – information as property
 - needed to overcome “effort aversion”, an assumption often made in neoclassical economics of labor
- But monetary rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation (Lepper et al.)

Rational Choice Theory, Capitalism and Communism

- Capitalism is often assumed to follow from rational choice assumptions (consistent and stable preferences, self-interest pursuit)
- But communism has also been argued for on rational choice grounds: advancing self-interest through collective action, maximizing total utility through more equal distributions of wealth