

The Age of Information

Momus

This is a public service announcement
Ladies and gentlemen, we are now entering
The age of information
It's perfectly safe
If we all take a few basic precautions
May I make some observations?
Axiom 1 for the world we've begun:
Your reputation used to depend on
What you concealed
Now it depends on what you reveal
The age of secretive mandarins who creep on heels of
tact is dead:
We are all players now in the great game of fact
instead
So since you can't keep your cards to your chest
I'd suggest you think a few moves ahead
As one does when playing a game of chess
Axiom 2 to make the world new:
Paranoia's simply a word for seeing things as they are
Act as you wish to be seen to act
Or leave for some other star
Somebody is prying through your files, probably
Somebody's hand is in your tin of Netscape magic
cookies
But relax: if you're an interesting person
Morally good in your acts
You have nothing to fear from facts
Axiom 3 for transparency:
In the age of information the only way to hide facts
Is with interpretations, there is no way to stop the
free exchange
Of idle speculations
In the days before communication privacy meant staying
at home
Sitting in the dark with the curtains shut unsure
whether to answer the phone
But these are different times, now the bottom line
Is that everyone should prepare to be known
Most of your friends will still like you fine
X said to Y what A said to B
B wrote an E-mail and sent it to me
I showed C and C wrote to A:
Flaming world war three
Cut, paste, forward, copy
CC, go with the flow
Our ambition should be to love what we finally know
Or, if it proves unloveable, simply to go
Axiom 4 for this world I adore:
Our loyalties should shift in view
According to what we know
And who we are speaking to
Once I was loyal to you, and prepared to be against
information
Now I am loyal to information, maybe I'm disloyal to
you
My loyalty becomes more complex and cubist with every
new fact I learn

It depends who I'm speaking to
And who they speak to in turn
Axiom 5 for information workers who wish to stay alive:
Supply, never withhold, the information requested
With total disregard for interests
Personal and vested
Chinese whispers was an analogue game
Where the signal degraded between brain and brain
Digital whispers is the same in reverse
The word we spread gets better, not worse
Better, not worse
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