

1984 or Brave New World? Who was right – Orwell or Huxley?

The cartoon sequence below, a visual adaptation of passages from Neil Postman's seminal [Amusing Ourselves to Death](#) by artist [Stuart McMillan](#), is featured in a stimulating [openDemocracy](#) article just published under the title '[Are you cultivating knowledge – or just consuming information?](#)' I'm reproducing it here because I think it speaks to some fundamental concerns of our times.

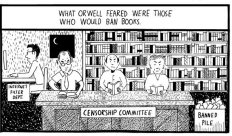
While highlighting the main thrust of the cartoon's warnings regarding the dangers of 'amusing ourselves to death', article author [Gregory Ciotti](#) nonetheless argues that it, along with much contemporary discussion of the internet's impact on human behaviour and consciousness, is in danger of both oversimplifying matters. Critically too, what's often left out of the debate, he argues, "is the fact that emerging technologies are a double-edged sword. Whether the internet is a mindless distraction or the greatest educational tool ever invented is all in *how* you use it." (my italics).

See what you think!

MINOR CHANGES TO BOOK by Neal Postman



ALDOUS HUXLEY vs GEORGE ORWELL
Author "Brave New World" Author "Nineteen Eighty-Four"



WHAT ORWELL FEARED WERE THOSE WHO WOULD BAN BOOKS



ORWELL FEARED THOSE WHO WOULD REMOVE US OF INFORMATION



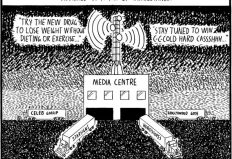
HUXLEY FEARED THOSE WHO WOULD USE US SO MUCH THAT WE WOULD BE REDUCED TO PRIVITY AND EGOTISM



ORWELL FEARED THE TRUTH WOULD BE CONCEALED FROM US



HUXLEY FEARED THE TRUTH WOULD BE OBSCURED IN A SEA OF RELEVANCE



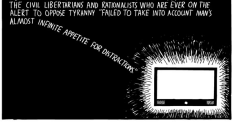
ORWELL FEARED WE WOULD BECOME A CAPTIVE CULTURE



HUXLEY FEARED WE WOULD BECOME A TRIVIAL CULTURE, PREOCCUPIED WITH SOME EQUIVOCAL OF THE PRESSURE, THE ONLY POLICY AND THE CENTRIFUGAL BUMBLEBEE



AS HUXLEY REMARKED IN "BRAVE NEW WORLD REVOLVED" THE CIVIL LIBERTARIANS AND SOCIALISTS WHO ARE EVER ON THE ALERT TO OPPOSE TRADING RULES TO FACE WITH ACCOUNT WHO'S ALMOST INFINITE APETITE FOR INFORMATION



IN "NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR" PEOPLE ARE CONTROLLED BY INTELLECTUAL PAIN



IN "BRAVE NEW WORLD" PEOPLE ARE CONTROLLED BY INFLECTING PLEASURE



IN SHORT ORWELL FEARED THAT HIS US RATE WILL RUIN US



HUXLEY FEARED THAT WHAT WE LOVE WILL RUIN US



ALL WORDS FROM "MANKING OURSELVES TO DEATH: PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN THE AGE OF SHOW BUSINESS" BY NEAL POSTMAN
... A BOOK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT HUXLEY WAS ORWELL WAS RIGHT

Full credit to the highly talented [Stuart McMillen](#) for this. Stuart is also the artist for Gregory Ciotti's [Supernormal Stimuli](#) series.