

At its heart, the purpose of our collective Topical Discussions and Topical Seminars over this past year (and previous years as well) is to help us “think well” or at least “think better” about systems of thinking, forms of government, and new technologies that are at work “behind the scenes” in our lives as we live them day to day.

Because “social media” and its enabler “the internet” are so ubiquitous and integrated into these lives it becomes too easy to just roll along. We get whatever info or pleasure we seek from them and bring the ideas that come to us in this fashion into our current language and conversations with family and friends.

Hence, the importance of Pete’s instructions and resources.

Using Chris McCarthy the math teacher and his successes and challenges of teaching any topic (let alone Mathematics, algebra?, geometry? Trig? Who needs that?) is a great kick-off. These events apparently occur so often that the school administrative staff couldn’t imagine that the change.org petition would be so upsetting. - Like Pete says - “It’s not a world I know” - Yet here it is.

The Center for Humane Technology, Tristan Harris, and all of its collaborators, SME’s and resources have done a lot of work that can be of use to students, educators, citizens and policy makers in building the case that not only is change necessary, but that there are critical means by which the change can occur.

Which leads me to what might be the larger issue for our times. Making the case for some agreed upon rules to be followed for a common good. I am in the camp that values the role of regulation to “correct market imperfections”.

If there are no boundaries set on corporate behavior, if there are no values held other than “bottom line”, advertising revenue, cash in pocket, if no one wants to obey a law, let alone enforce it, then are we not finding ourselves back in the Gilded Age of the United States post Civil War?

I appreciated CHT’s identifying multiple areas of interest:

Future Generations

Mental Health and Attention

The Information Environment

Democratic Functioning

Privacy and Security

These will help us “eat the elephant” - one bite at a time.

I look forward to the exchange of views.

Pat Newcomb