

Philosophy and the Social Web

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The centralised Panopticon-like architecture of the current Social Networks is the root of the very serious privacy and surveillance issues which beset them. The key to solving this problem is a technical/philosophical one. Linking cryptography to the IRI (International Resource Identifier) and building on the Fregean sense/reference distinction that is the cornerstone of the semantic web, we uncover an exit hidden in full view of all the world, built into most browsers - an exit to the decentralised Social Web.

To understand how this opening can grow, take hold and transform the current prison-like networks we point to the philosophy of language of Ruth Gareth Millikan whose biological insight of language evolution and referentiality, can be transposed in very fruitful ways to the machine parsable languages of the web which grow, reproduce and reproduce faster as the network effect of their interlinked value grows. The Social Web being decentralised could only grow of course if it allowed a diversity of conflicting views to be expressed in machine readable format. Machines will no longer be able to assume that what they read is true. As a major computer science advance, the semantic web builds a structure that makes non autistic programming possible and useful, a major step towards the creation of machines with an attitude.