

# Enjoying the Internet

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Since ancient times, no matter for what purpose the researcher and inventor of technology did their work, the final results were mostly similar, that is the secularization of the core meaning of the progress in technology and the improvement of the daily life of common people based on it. In terms of the intensity of the improvement of daily life, the invention and usage of the Internet can be rated as the strongest and most profound technological progress ever made in the history of mankind.

I only understand Chinese, so I know little about Australia. Here I can only offer my own personal opinions based on my personal usage of the Internet.

First of all let's discuss the acquisition of information. Nobody will totally accept the information he receives. Since the appearance of such a thing as information in the human society, people have been struggling with the maker and manipulator of information. Because the lust for manipulating information has never stopped, our struggle is unable to stop. Mankind went through the struggle with different information carriers such as the legend, mythology, superstition and rumor, and this struggle is particularly fierce especially with such news carriers as the newspaper and periodical after their appearance. Today, our target of struggle has become the information manipulator on the Internet.

The manipulation of political, commercial and cultural information is like disease, which is a co-existence with the human society and difficult to dispel. The appearance of the Internet makes this kind of manipulation more convenient and at a lower cost. Fortunately, mankind is intelligent with the ability to distinguish. We can be on the alert for the inundation of certain information on the Internet and find the voices different from it or opposing it very conveniently on the Internet to draw our own conclusion by contrast. From this perspective, if people's judgment is not hindered by the impulse of emotions, the Internet also serves as a powerful tool to abolish prejudice and lies and defeat the information manipulators. Depending on this, the dignity of mankind's intelligent can be safeguarded.

The most common information manipulator is advertisers. The Internet and Big Data has realized the scientific illusion of advertisers since they can push the goods and ideas to individuals accurately through "algorithm". My way of addressing this problem is clumsy, but has produced some effect. I just keep deleting the information they pushed, so the "algorithm" becomes puzzled since it does not know what I like. Then the news page on my cell-phone can demonstrate the original contents. Of course, this is only a method for the present. Perhaps the Internet will develop a new method to tackle me tomorrow. However, so long as we keep our head cool based on the common sense, we can minimize the impact on us by the information manipulator.

We criticized the information manipulator on the Internet just now, but the Internet is really a good tool. So, the second point I want to talk about today is "enjoying knowledge" relying on the Internet.

Today, among the living people, a lot of them once used the library. So they all know the index card of the library is too troublesome and inconvenient compared with the search engine. Now perhaps every writer is using the search engine because it is not only convenient, but also can expand our vision, allowing us to understand the same issue from the texts to pictures, audio frequency and video. In this way, we can get the most reference materials within a short time, helping us to form a viewpoint, substantiate the argument and promote the quality of the viewpoint and article. However, in my opinion, the contents obtained from the search engine can only be used as a reference but not "quotations". If "quotations" are needed in writing, it is necessary to search the original paper book or at least the website of the original work. Otherwise it is very probable to make mistakes.

Now I will come to the practice of "listening to the broadcast of a book". Because the cell-phone nearly becomes a new organ of the human body, our eyes have become the most tired organ in the history of mankind now. So, "listening to the broadcast of a book" replacing a part of reading is an inevitable trend. If it is not for writing but only for enriching one's scope of knowledge or making preparation for a certain research topic, my personal habit is to "listen to the broadcast of a book".

There are several websites that are specialized broadcasting books at present in China. They offer services both at a charge and free of charge, but most services are free. Mostly I will choose the free service because the overwhelming majority of non-popular and noncommercial books were read by the amateurs, belonging to free services. Though they did not do a good job, they read every word out at least, which is enough to me. The greatest advantage in "listening to the broadcast of a book" lies in the fact that one can do two jobs at the same time---I can listen to the broadcast of *The Thorn Birds* (A river novel written by Australian writer Colleen McCullough) while cleaning the room, taking a flight or cooking meals. So, the boring daily life will be enriched by the destiny of Meggie. Or, I can search for the pictures and information of relevant works of art on the cell-phone while listening to the broadcast of the art history. Mankind's creativity is limitless, especially in the area of enjoyment. I believe everybody will find his/her own unique way to enjoy the Internet, different from all others.

Then what functions do paper books have? Now I only buy the books I have already listened to and want to collect or those not being broadcast but I want to read. I have been buying books for more than 40 years, possessing probably five or six thousand books. They have taken up a big space, but I am unwilling to abandon them. I think the contemporary young people would not like to burden themselves with that. However, I will reiterate that paper books will not disappear. The only difference from the past is that readers will be more prudent in their choice. After all, the housing price is expensive and paper books take up too much space.

Third, I will discuss something within my profession. My profession is a household cook and self-claimed gourmet. Literary creation is only a free-time hobby.

In China, online shopping can almost "realize the ideal of life" for a food lover. I am so happy that I can break away from the supermarket. The joy of breaking away from the "choice of others" is really bright. Now it is so easy for me to purchase the local specialty all over China online---from the seasoning, fruits & vegetables, all kinds of grains to the specialty of some small remote places with an extremely low output or special food materials recorded in the history book. At the same time, I

can buy the foods from all parts of the world as well, including the beef and grape wine produced in Australia. As to the foods produced in Australia, I have some doubt. That is “now that the Australian grape wine is very popular in China, why don’t the chateaus in Australia set up stores on the shopping website of China?” The same is true with the beef, mutton and marine products. If Australian enterprises set up shops on the Internet in China directly, we do not need to buy through the intermediate dealers.

Finally I will tell you an unreliable rumor on the Internet. I once saw an online rumor saying there are too many hares on the pastures of Australia, causing great trouble to local people. There were a lot of messages left by Chinese netizens with the most being “Now we have a developed ‘cold chain’, why not catch these hares, process them and then export them to China?” I only know little about Australia, but I have the same question. China has a beautiful city called Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province and also the birthplace of "Sichuan Cuisine"---one of the eight major food schools in China. According to the incomplete statistics, the number of the rabbits consumed in this city in one year is not lower than 150 million. Some curious young people would choose to take a vacationing trip to Chengdu to taste the delicious rabbit there. People can also buy the rabbit products on the Internet very easily. I once talked about it with an American writer and he asked me then “Do the people in other cities of China eat rabbit too?” I really didn’t know how to answer him, so I had to tell him that “There are not many rabbits in China and they are only enough for the people in that city to eat.”

# 享用互联网

## 龙一

自古至今，科学技术的研究者和发明者不论是出于怎样的目的，其最终结果多半相似，就是科学技术进步的核心意义总会世俗化，变成对普通人日常生活的改善。从对生活改善的强度来讲，互联网的发明和广泛使用，是人类历史上对日常生活最强烈，最深刻的科技进步。

我只懂得汉语，不了解澳大利亚的情况，在这里我只能就个人的互联网生活，谈一点浅显的感受。

首先谈一谈信息的获得。没有人会完全接受遇到的信息，自人类社会出现信息这种东西以来，人们一直在与信息的制造者和操纵者进行斗争。操纵信息的野心从来不曾停止，我们的斗争也就无法停止。人类经历了与传说、神话、迷信和谣言等各种信息载体的斗争，特别是报纸、期刊等新闻载体出现这后，这种斗争尤为激烈，直到今天，我们的斗争对象变成了互联网上的信息操纵者。

对政治、商业和文化信息的操纵像疾病一样，是人类社会的共生现象，难以消除，互联网的出现，使这种操纵变得更便利，成本更低。幸运的是，人类是有分辨能力的智慧生物，让我们能够在遭遇互联网上某种特定信息的轰炸时及时警觉，并能很便利地在互联网上找到与之不同或相反的意见，互相对照，得出自己的结论。从这个角度看，人们如果不是被冲动的感情蒙蔽了判断力，互联网同样是破除偏见与谎言，击败信息操纵者的有力工具，人类智慧的尊严也能够借此得以维护。

最常见的信息操纵者就是广告商。互联网和大数据让广告商的科学幻想得以实现，他们能够通过“算法”准确地向个人推送商品和观念。我个人的应对办法非常笨拙，但却有一点效果，就是不断删除他们推送给我的东西，让“算法”产生困惑，不知道我喜欢什么，于是，我手机上的新闻网页便能呈现出基本的原始模样。当然了，这只是今天的办法，也许明天互联网便会想出新办法来对付我。不过，只要我们基于常识，保持冷静的判断力，我们就能将信息操纵者对我们的影响降到最低。

刚刚我们批判了互联网上的信息操纵者，但互联网真正是个好东西。所以，第二点我想谈一谈借用互联网“享受知识”。

当今活着的人中，使用过图书馆的人仍然很多，所以大家都知道，与搜索引擎比起来，图书馆的索引卡片有多么麻烦和不方便。现在每一个写作者可能都在使用搜索引擎，因为它不仅仅方便，更能扩展视野，让我们对同一问题的了解，从文字扩展到图片、音频和视频，能够在短时间内得到最多的参考资料，有利于我们形成观点，充实论据，提升文章和观点的品质。然而，我个人的看法是，搜索引擎上得到的内容，只能当作参考，不能作为“引文”使用。如果写作中需要“引文”，查阅纸质原著，至少是查阅原著网站，是必不可少的环节，否则出错的机率会很大。

现在我们谈谈“听书”。由于手机几乎变成了人体的新器官，现在我们的眼睛成为了人类历史上最劳累的一个器官，所以，用“听书”代替部分阅读，应该是必然趋势。如果不是以写作为目的，仅仅是为了曾广见闻，或是为某个研究题目作准备，我个人的习惯是“听书”。

中国目前有几家专门朗读书籍的网站，里边有收费项目，更多的是免费项目。我听免费项目比较多，因为，绝大多数不流行，非商业性的书籍，都是由非专业人士朗读的，属于免费项目。他们虽然读得不好，但至少将每一个词都读了出来，这对我就足够了。“听书”最大的好处就是可以一心二用，我可以一边打扫房间、乘坐飞机或者烹调食物，一边听人给我朗读《荆棘鸟》（澳大利亚考琳·麦卡洛著长篇小说），于是，枯燥的日常会因梅吉（Meggie）的命运而变得丰富。或者，我可以一边听人朗读艺术史，一边用手机搜索相关艺术品的图片与信息。人的创造力无限，特别是在享受方面，我相信每个人都会找到自己独特的享受互联网的方式，而且是与众不同的方式。

那么纸质图书还有什么作用么？我现在只买听过又想收藏的书，或者没有人朗读却又想读的书。我买了四十多年的书，大约有五六千本，占用的空间很大，却又舍不得处理掉，估计现在年轻人应该不会给自己增加这种负担。但是，我特别强调一点，纸质书不会消亡，只不过读者的选择会更谨慎而已，毕竟现在房价很贵，纸质书占用空间太多了。

第三，我谈一点本行的内容。我的本行是家庭厨师和自封的美食家，文学创作算是业余爱好。

在中国，互联网购物对一个美食爱好者来讲，差不多可以说是“人生理想实现了”。我非常庆幸自己能够从超级市场挣脱出来，这种从“别人的选择”中挣脱出来的快乐，实在是美好。现在我可以很容易在网上买到中国各个地方的特产，从调味品、水果蔬菜、各种粮食，一直到某些偏僻小地方产量极低的特产，或是历史书中记载的特殊食材，应有尽有。同时，我也可以买到一部分世界各地的食物，包括澳大利亚生产的牛肉和葡萄酒。对于澳大利亚的食物，我有一点疑惑，就澳大利亚的葡萄酒在中国很受欢迎，为什么澳大利亚的葡萄酒庄不到中国的购物网上开设商店？牛肉、羊肉和海产品也是如此。如果澳大利亚的企业直接在中国开设网店，我们就不用通过中间商购买了。

最后讲一个不可靠的互联网传言。我曾经在网上看到一则传言，说澳大利亚的牧场上野兔泛滥成灾，造成了很大的麻烦。在这则传言的下边有许多中国网友的留言，最多的留言是“现在‘冷链’那么发达，为什么不把这些野兔抓住，加工出口到中国呢？”我不了解澳大利亚的情况，但疑问却是相同的。中国有一座美丽的城市叫成都，是四川省的省会，也是中国八个主要美食流派之一，“川菜”的发源地。据不完全统计，这座城市一年吃掉的兔子不低於一亿五千万只，有些好奇的年轻人为了品尝那里美味的兔肉，专门选择到那个地方去休假旅行。在网上，人们也可以很容易买到那里的兔肉制品。我曾经和一位美国作家聊起此事，他问：“中国其他城市也吃兔肉吗？”我当真不知道怎么回答，只能跟他说：“中国的兔子不太多，只够那一个城市的人吃。”