Power to the people and double phantasy in the cloud!

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Only a few years ago we had several scientific themes under titles such as "Power to the People", which emphasized that in the near future, houses could become largely self-sufficient with regard to utilities such as electricity, and even water (cleaning), by collecting shower water and rainwater and to reuse. Through for example solar panels, electricity could be generated and stored in private Tesla Wall batteries. But, we could have known that the interests of multinationals would not be served by this ...

On the contrary, meanwhile all our valuable memories (photos, videos) and papers have been transferred from our private property to "the cloud". At first photos, papers and music were transformed from picture books, files and records to memory sticks and later - via countless apps - in data. And data is seen as gold for advertisers, companies and - much less - scientists. Whereas commercial interest has direct access to data, scientific interest goes through huge numbers of ethical committees and protocols, but that's another's story. There are several major objections to decentralized (in the cloud) data storage. I want to consider two threats- 1. Decreasing (human) diversity and 2. Promoting anti-sustainable boundlessness. In this column we'll focus on the second point (next week we'll consider the first point).

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Children and young people no longer experience the costs and effort that has to be taken for every photo (let alone video) to be developed and stored. In the past, one had to think carefully about what is thought to be worth preserving (or posting). When we started photographing and filming digitally, but still had to provide a storage medium (often with limited capacity), there was (albeit less) still a brake on our need to share every second of our lives with others. Now that we can store everything in the cloud, including music, writings and even real time communicating and often for free in exchange for our privacy that we are wasting in the fine print that nobody reads, we are completely beside ourselves. Figuratively and literally. We feed our virtual doubles - our digital twins - with likes and lots of attention and tend to neglect our physical condition. From this life style has become a blooming business.

As a result, we are increasingly less physically experiencing our need to share. As a consequence, we are lonely, which drives us to cure this loneliness by "living" and sharing (revealing) our "double" lives more and more virtually or digitally. It is a vicious circle that is also very environmentally harmful, because all that private data runs on servers 24/7. If we continue with this practice of boundlessly doubling our lives in the cloud - feeding our "digital twins" - , it is estimated that in 30 years it will cost 10 times as much energy per day as all global air traffic costs per day at present. Consequently, our "being in the cloud" does not only lead to psychological and social poverty; it also threatens our planet and survival as a species. Whatever the case may be, the pursuit of self-sufficiency in energy and data storage from the introduction seems to me to be further removed from us than ever before.

(To be continued)