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A network, software or natural computing?
What are the defining technologies of
Homo informaticus's philosophy?

ABSTRACT. 30 years ago J.D. Bolter coined the term 'defining technology', which denotes a technology that shapes the culture and mentality of human beings. This concept describes the role of technology as a source of cognitive metaphors. The author of this article is interested in metaphors that have an influence on philosophical thinking.

Bolter argued that the digital computer was the defining technology of the late 20th century. He also created the concept of 'Turing's man', which refers to a man who has been shaped by interactions with digital computers. Bolter's book appeared when computer networks were not popular nor global and when J.C.R. Licklider's ideas were only known to specialists.

The globalization of networking requires redefining Bolter's concept – the term 'Licklider's man' could be used instead of 'Turing's man'.

It is worthwhile to ask whether networking is today's only defining technology. Can software or certain services constitute a defining technology (e.g. a social network service)? Can natural computing change our perception of a defining technology?

Paweł Polak, Wydział Filozoficzny, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie, ul. Kanonicza 9, 31-002 Kraków i Centrum Kopernika Badań Interdyscyplinarnych – grupa „Filozofia w informatyce", pawel.polak@upjp2.edu.pl.