

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave ...and libraries

Yves DESRICHARD, enssib
(Berlin, July 2010)

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- The digital wave is about to make Pascal's belief come true. This French philosopher wants us to stay in a room – to think of what really matters. It was all about our death. And God.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Today, people and users (my son mainly) stay in a room quite a lot of time. But it's not for the same purposes. It's all about computers and the Internet.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- So, people and users are not going anymore in our libraries. But there's still hope. It's all about rabbits and borders.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Just forget the δόξα.
- Facts and convictions about the future of libraries and librarians, in a totally subjective way.



Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- « J'ai découvert que tout le malheur des hommes vient d'une seule chose, qui est de ne pas savoir demeurer en repos dans une chambre ».

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- “All of man's misfortune comes from one thing, which is not knowing how to sit quietly in a room”.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- For Pascal, we have to stay in a room because what is important is God.
- By now, we may stay in a room because all what is important for us is here.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- It is now not necessary to leave home to reach everything that man has been seeking "away from home". All knowledge is online.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Now, Pascal's advice is becoming true. But it's not about God anymore.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- If you believe the proponents of the catastrophic future of libraries, the digital wave will wipe out the library as a place, what it contains and the services it offers...

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- ... but it may only be true for a certain kind of library.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- So, are a physical location, collections and services of use anymore ? Shall we disappear ?

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- In fact, the Internet and Pascal's room have much to share...

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- ... but it's mainly about « divertissement ». Let's talk for example about “collective intelligence” ...

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Let's talk too about digital natives.
Are they ?

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Increasing the stock of information and products available online does not increase knowledge : "less is more".

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries



Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- What if the librarians were the Berlin rabbits of the digital wave?

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- The library as a « third place »...
between Pascal's room... and
work. A real place, a virtual place.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Librarians (and libraries) can and must flourish in the no-man's lands that the digital wave generates.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Because there's still so much borders between users in their Pascal's room and the digital wave...
- Between users and documents...

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Because there's still so much borders between users in their Pascal's room and the digital wave...
- ... among users...

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Because there's still so much borders between users in their Pascal's room and the digital wave...
- ... and within places.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- And if, in fact, man could not be satisfied with “Pascal's room” ?
- If he simply could not find in himself and in an isolated place the entire satisfaction of his needs ?

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Never yield to the idolatry of technology for technology's sake.
- We must advocate the return of human contacts, however imperfect they may be.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- “With iPods and iPads and Xboxes and PlayStations – none of which I know how to work – information becomes a distraction, a diversion, a form of entertainment, rather than a tool of empowerment“ (President Obama).

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- "The more we make case of
ourselves, the less you suffer. I think
the opposite" (Alexander Jolien,
French philosopher gravely
disabled).

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- Pascal is not true : to stay in a room is what makes us unhappy.

Pascal's room, Berlin rabbits, the digital wave and libraries

- And I do love rabbits. I don't eat them anymore.