

PERSPECTIVES ON INTELLIGENCE FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE COLLECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The advent of the Internet has given rise to multifarious forms of information production and consumption by individuals and by collections of agents, both computation and human. The term “collective intelligence” remains necessarily ill defined. Some examples of the way in which the term is applied or implied include: reference to human beings working together intentionally; collaborative filtering and people as less intentional providers of Big Data; and ‘swarm intelligences’ afforded by collections of computational agents.

All of these perspectives carry with them embedded assumptions about what constitutes intelligence, how it is recognized and how it grows. Questions also arise regarding of whom the collective is or should be

made and the boundaries of the known or knowable problem space.

With recourse to projects conducted over the past several years at Yahoo! and projects conducted on mediated communication, workflow and collaboration support systems prior to that, I will offer a critical reexamination of these concepts touching on different perspectives of collectives.

In an intentionally contrarian stance, I will look at exclusion and inclusion to the collective, and consider barriers to representation and participation. I will illustrate the importance of asking the following questions: What are the consequences when ‘intelligence’ is collected rather than collective? In what circumstances is the “collective” or the “collection” exclusionary rather than participatory?