PROBOSCIS: Private Reveries, Public Spaces — Responses to the Brief

Simon Poulter
OFFLINE

1 – Brief description of the project.
   OFFLINE — a research programme to develop human tools and resources to avoid 24/7 work patterns and availability.

2 – How does your proposal go 'beyond convergence'?
   My proposal seeks to look at the human issues affecting convergence, the fact that we carry over patterns of behaviour from one technology to another which are inappropriate.

3 – How have you addressed the key relationship of public and private spaces?
   Practically, I am examining the notion of what public and private spaces are. In terms of the project I want to carry out a critical response to the propaganda associated with new technologies. In essence I will be developing a public campaign and resource which highlights problems with new technologies. This will be developed through performances, meetings, research and proposed practical tools (web site, print media).

4 – Is your proposal a critique of the technologies of convergence, if so in what way?
   Yes, it confronts the idea that new technologies are 'good' and that they 'speed things up'. I will be seeking to show that in fact new technologies create an adjusted behaviour pattern and if anything a distraction.

5 – How does your proposal relate to society and community?
   I perceive that society and the community need more tools and strategies to be away from new technology ('offline'). This is not an anti-technology stance but a means of seeking a human responsive scale.

6 – What audience or public does the proposal address?
   This proposal has a potentially wide ambit. It is in some way iconoclastic (like most of my work) but I can see that this might be relevant to technologists, economists, business people and the general public.

7a. Please indicate which of the issues, listed in the brief, your proposal responds to and,
7b. how it addresses them.
   My proposal responds to the social impact of technologies on society — it asks basic questions around the propaganda of new technologies. It also addresses issues connected to social interrelations and posits the view that perhaps through avatars we can be 24/7 but that biologically we are not able to be 'open channel'. It responds to the final point of your outline — namely the notion of being offline as if to say that we are developing the equivalent of a human crash. The outline is strangely synonymous with E.M Forster's short story 'The Machine Stops' — although I am arguing for a critical and strategic response to the use of new technologies not a complete switching off.