In Search of Ariadne's Thread in Digital Labyrinths

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Abstract

The aim of the following presentation is to provide a brief personal account of the results of some of the panels and sessions that took place at the Vienna Summit 2014 "The Information Society at the Crossroads" (June 3-7, 2015) in which I was involved as a participant and speaker. I will first summarize what I learned regarding some of the challenges in the fields of information ethics, dealing particularly with issues of social responsibility, critical theory, robotics, global brain, and philosophy of information. Secondly, I will relay the results of an email exchange that took place following the Vienna Summit conference between a number of colleagues and myself in which we explored our perceptions of the issues at hand and the stakes involved and whether or not we were able to trace to any length 'Ariadne's thread' in digital labyrinths. I will clarify how even though such labyrinths and digital threads are a part of today's societies they are often confused with society and with our being-in-the-world itself. To signify my argument, and to show how such confusion can result in mortal consequences, I will conclude by outlining the case of the Chinese poet and migrant worker Xu Lizhi (24) who committed suicide after working for Foxconn for just three years.