

Freedom and Justice in the Commons

A Political Economy of Information

Focus

- **Two aspects central to the emerging technological-economic condition of the networked information economy**
 - Non-market production
 - Radically decentralized production
- **Alternative modes of production promise more robust fulfillment commitments to**
 - Democracy
 - Autonomy
 - Justice & Human Development
- **The battle over the institutional ecology of information**

A Moment of Opportunity

- **150 year trend: concentration and commercialization of information production**
 - **mechanical presses & telegraph extend social reach and raise capital cost of communication to relevant community**
 - **Public discourse adapts to increasingly one-way, from professional commercial producers to passive consumers**
 - **Easily adapted to radio, television, etc.**

A Moment of Opportunity

- **150 years trend to industrial model of information production**
- **The internet represents opportunity for radical reversal of this trend**
 - **Extends reach by decentralizing the distribution function**
 - **Physical capital diffuse, much of it owned by end users**
 - **Routers and servers not qualitatively different from PCs as is a network broadcast station or cable head end from a television**

A Moment of Opportunity

- **150 years trend to industrial model of information production**
- **Internet represents opportunity for radical reversal of this trend**
- **Entering a moment in which human beings, rather than capital, can become the organizing factor of our communications system and the information environment it makes possible**

Some Basic Economics

- **Standard problems of information production**
 - **Information is a “public good”**
 - **Nonrivalry is central and irreducible**
 - **On the Shoulders of Giants**
 - **Information is both input and output of its own production process**
 - **Some non-market, non-proprietary production is necessary to maintain efficient information production; how much is difficult and context dependent**

Some Basic Economics

- **Standard problems of information**
- **The cost of information production includes**
 - **cost of communication (fixing & transmitting)**
 - **cost of existing information**
 - **cost of human creative work**
- **Low cost processors and ubiquitous network connections plus nonrivalry of information isolate human creative inputs as central**

Some Basic Economics

- **Standard problems of information**
- **Low cost processors and ubiquitous network connections isolate human creative inputs as central**
- **Human beings are central because of attributes in which they differ widely and diversely—creativity, wisdom, taste, experience—not because of fungible characteristics that fit a Taylorist model**
- **And human beings act for diverse motivations, not only money, but also social-psychological**

Organization of Production

- **Physical economy settled on two modes: markets and managerial hierarchy**
 - **Most people live productive life as part of organizations, following orders**
 - **Most people live much of the rest of life consuming from menus of heavily advertised finished goods determined by managerial investment decisions**
- **Industrial information economy followed the same model**
 - **Condensing around high physical capital requirements**

Networked Information Economy

- **Two emerging phenomena**
 - **Increasing role for non-market information producers**
 - **Always much greater than in physical economy—academic science, PBS, Consumer Reports**
 - **Lower publication costs & wider reach increase number that are efficacious and overall effectiveness**

Networked Information Economy

- **Two emerging phenomena**
 - **Increasing role for non-market information producers**
 - **Emergence of large scale commons-based peer production**
 - **Science; OED**
 - **Free software core example**
 - **Peer-production all around**

Peer production

- **Collaborations among groups of individuals, up to large scales, that do not rely on markets or managerial hierarchy for motivation or organization**
- **Instead use a social transactional framework to motivate and coordinate**
- **Have lower transaction costs, improved information about human creative availability, and are likely better at motivating small-scale contributions to large integrative projects**

Democracy

- **Political Discourse**
 - **Owners control information flow in democracy; disproportionate power (“Berlusconi effect”)**
 - **Jonas of IDT: “Sure I want to be the biggest telecom company in the world, but it's just a commodity. I want to be able to form opinion. By controlling the pipe, you can eventually get control of the content”**

Democracy

- **Political Discourse**
 - **Sinclair's decisions**
 - **Nightline's reading of names**
 - **anti-Kerry campaign**
 - **bloggers organize resistance**
 - **MoveOn ad challenge**
 - **Meet-up as model; used for large scale organization**
 - **Blogoshpere**
 - **Swarthmore students' leading role in exposing the Diebold failures**

War? Targeting Diebold with Electronic Civil Disobedience

<http://why-war.com/features/2003/10/diebold.htm>

Why War?

why-war.com

Targeting Diebold with Electronic Civil Disobedience

Prepared by STAFF for *Why War?*

Why are these memos controversial? Read the excerpts and see for yourself, then read the campaign update or the most recent press release. You may also want to see where Diebold machines are used (pdf) and find out why they're getting sued. The latest information about the suit itself is available at the Swarthmore Coalition for the Digital Commons. Also check out *Black Box Voting*, now out in print.

How to get the files:

- **Browse** the documents: <http://chroot.net/s/lists/>, <http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/~ping/diebold/lists.html>
- **Search** the documents: <http://diebold.f-451.net/search/search.php>
- **BitTorrent**: <http://cscott.net/Activism/lists.tgz.torrent>
- **EDonkey/Overnet**: [ed2k://|file|list.tar.bz2|7762005|e53855d1e5da1fee2da1548905bc689f|/]
- **Freenet**:

Democracy

- **Political Discourse**
 - **Berlusconi effect**
 - **“Baywatch effect”**: Owners respond to norm, producing bland, inoffensive fare
 - **Brandeis in *Whitney***: the dangers of an inert public
 - **No coffins on mainstream media until...**
 - **The Memory Hole**



Democracy

- **Political Democratic Discourse**
- **Cultural Democracy**
 - **Cultural studies concerns with media**
 - **Fan Fiction; Jedi Saga; Second Life**
 - **Barbie**
 - **Wikipedia vs Encarta**
 - **Google vs overture**

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Barbie

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

For other uses, see [Barbie \(disambiguation\)](#).

Barbie is the world's best selling [doll](#) and was first sold on [March 9, 1959](#). The best selling Barbie was one released in [1992](#), [Totally Hair Barbie](#), with stylable hair so long it reached from her head down to her toes.

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Development

Ruth Handler had noted that her daughter Barbara preferred playing with paper dolls that looked like adults rather than like children. When in

[edit]

Controversies [edit]

Barbie's Physical Evolution [edit]

Over the years, Barbie has evolved. Originally available as either a blonde or brunette, Barbie has changed the color of her hair many times since her introduction in 1959. Today there are ethnically diverse versions of Barbie that feature different skin tones, facial characteristics, as well as different hair colors and make-up.

One of the most publicized changes happened around the turn of the century, as Barbie's ultra-thin waist widened to more natural proportions. This change, rallied for years by some parents' and anorexia groups, is to encourage young girls not to be as hyper-actively concerned with their weight, and thus to eat more healthily and avoid eating disorders.

Other discussions [edit]

Barbie is often looked upon as an icon of western childhood. Her popularity ensures that her effect on the play of Western children attracts unusual scrutiny.

The enormous range of available accessories relating clothes, hair, make-up, parties and looking pretty give rise to the accusation that Barbie encourages young girls to focus on shallow trivia. Her accessories reflect a lifestyle that is unobtainable for most of the girls who play with her. She also portrays an unrealistic body image: if Barbie were scaled to human proportions, she would be towering over most men and have an impossible breast size. For most of her life she was available only as a white woman of apparently European descent.

However at the time Barbie was released, most dolls were baby substitutes, rather than adult dolls, and it could be said that Barbie's very existence encouraged girls to play outside the traditional role of housewife and mother. The range of professions for which Barbie accessories can be bought has been expanded recently, including doctor, politician, US Marine and paralympic athlete. Barbies with different racial characteristics have also become available in recent decades.

Because Barbie is a cultural icon in the United States, and the dolls are inexpensive and easily obtained, artists have referred to Barbie and her accompanying products, either as homage or as parody. The Mattel Corporation disapproves of many of these uses for the dolls, and has used trademark and copyright claims to attempt to suppress them.

"**Barbie**" is often used as a derogatory slang word to mean that a person, particularly a girl or woman, is stupid, as in "Barbie brain", "Barbie bimbo" or "Barbie head".

The Middle Eastern country of Saudi Arabia outlawed Barbie dolls on September 10, 2003.



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Talk:Barbie

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

On [Template:March 9 selected anniversaries](#)

This article is full of Registered Trademark symbols: ®

[Wikipedia talk:Trademark notices](#) would suggest we don't need to do that. Any objections if I remove them? [Sam](#) 04:23, 19 Dec 2003 (UTC)

I got rid of them before seeing this note. There were a lot, and I may have missed a few... [Tuf-Kat](#) 20:40, Jan 4, 2004 (UTC)

Comparisons of Barbie's dimensions to those of real women.

[\[edit\]](#)

The trouble with most comparisons of Barbie's dimensions to those of real women is that they never quote the actual dimensions of the Barbie dolls themselves, but only what selected dimensions would be when scaled up to 'life-size'. (In this article for instance it states, "in real life she would be towering over most men and have an impossible breast size".)

Whilst I understand the intention of such descriptions is to try to combat the problem of poor self-image and it's related disorders, I don't agree with the way the data is presented in an attempt to support the intentions, (as in my opinion, the end does not justify the means). I also think that attempting to present the data in this way actually detracts from its impact and relevance. Furthermore, such descriptions are meaningless unless at least one actual dimension of the doll is given as a base reference for scaling. We might as well say Barbie would be 10 or a 100 ft tall, as it completely depends on what scale we adopt, which in turn completely depends on which particular dimension we choose to use to determine our scale factor.

Clearly if we chose to use a scale based on comparisons of the height of the Barbie doll to the height of 'real-life' women, then she would not be towering over most men, nor have an impossible breast size. She would, however, almost certainly have hip and waist measurements smaller than the average.

Given that her male companion doll, Ken, is slightly taller than the Barbie doll, it would seem reasonable to assume a 'real-life' Barbie would be taller than the average. Given the dolls are American, we could reasonably assume Ken is over 6 ft. Lets us therefore assume Ken to be around 6 ft 6. This would make Barbie around 6 ft herself, which is admittedly tall for a woman, but not unusual for models for instance, (a point I will come back to).

Multimedia from Encarta

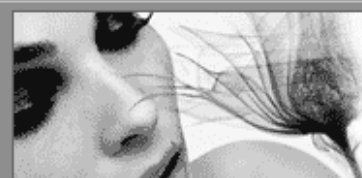
Appears in

Barbie Doll



The large wardrobe of the Barbie doll is reminiscent of the extensive wardrobes of fashion dolls popular in Europe in the late 19th century. However, while clothes designers in the past used fashion dolls to showcase their new creations, Barbie dolls, created in 1959, function mainly as toys. Manufacturers now more commonly produce ethnically diverse dolls, like this black Barbie.

Liaison Agency/Gilles Mingasson



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1. **Barbie, Klaus** Barbie, Klaus, 1913-91, Nazi war criminal known as the Butcher of Lyons. As Gestapo chief in Lyons, France (1942-44), he was responsible for the deaths of French Resistance members and thousands of Jews. After the war he secretly served as a U.S. army agent in Germany. In 1951 he fled Europe for Bolivia with U.S. help...

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2. **Lyons** Lyons, Fr. Lyonboth: lyôN', city (1990 pop. 422,444), capital of Rhône dept., E central France, at the confluence of the Rhône and Saône rivers. As an economic center and a densely populated metropolis it is second only to Paris. It leads Europe in silk and rayon production; it has important metal, machine, clothing, ...

Related: [French Geography](#)

3. **Oph?ax** Ophûls, Maxô' fûls, 1902-57, German-born French film director, b. Saarbrücken as Maximilian Oppenheimer. He started his career in the 1920s as an stage actor and director and began directing films in Berlin during the early 1930s. His early works include Liebelei (1933), made in Austria, and La Signora di Tutti (1933),...

Related: [Motion Picture Biographies](#)

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Barbie Collectibles - The official Mattel website for the hobby

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Democracy

- **Political Democratic Discourse**
- **Cultural Democracy**
- **Mix and match**
 - **Second life tax revolt**
 - **Read my lips**



BORN
FREE
TAXED
TO
DEATH

TAXES ARE
INCREASING

VOTE VOTE

CLOSED DUE TO BUDGET
RESTRICTIONS

LOVE





Autonomy

- **Autonomy**
 - **Extent of opportunities for control of information environment of others**
 - **Cisco White Paper “you could restrict the incoming push broadcasts as well as subscribers’ outgoing access to the push site to discourage its use. At the same time, you could promote your own or partner’s services with full speed features to encourage adoption of your services”**
 - **Critical viewpoints about how life can be lived**

Autonomy

- **Autonomy**
 - **Cross-conception**
 - **Substantive**
 - **Consumers to users**
 - **Vikings at Gander Academy**
 - **Blogs**
 - **Jedi Saga**
 - **Peter Ludlow's game within Second Life**
 - **Employees to peers**
 - **Free software developers**
 - **Xerox Eureka**

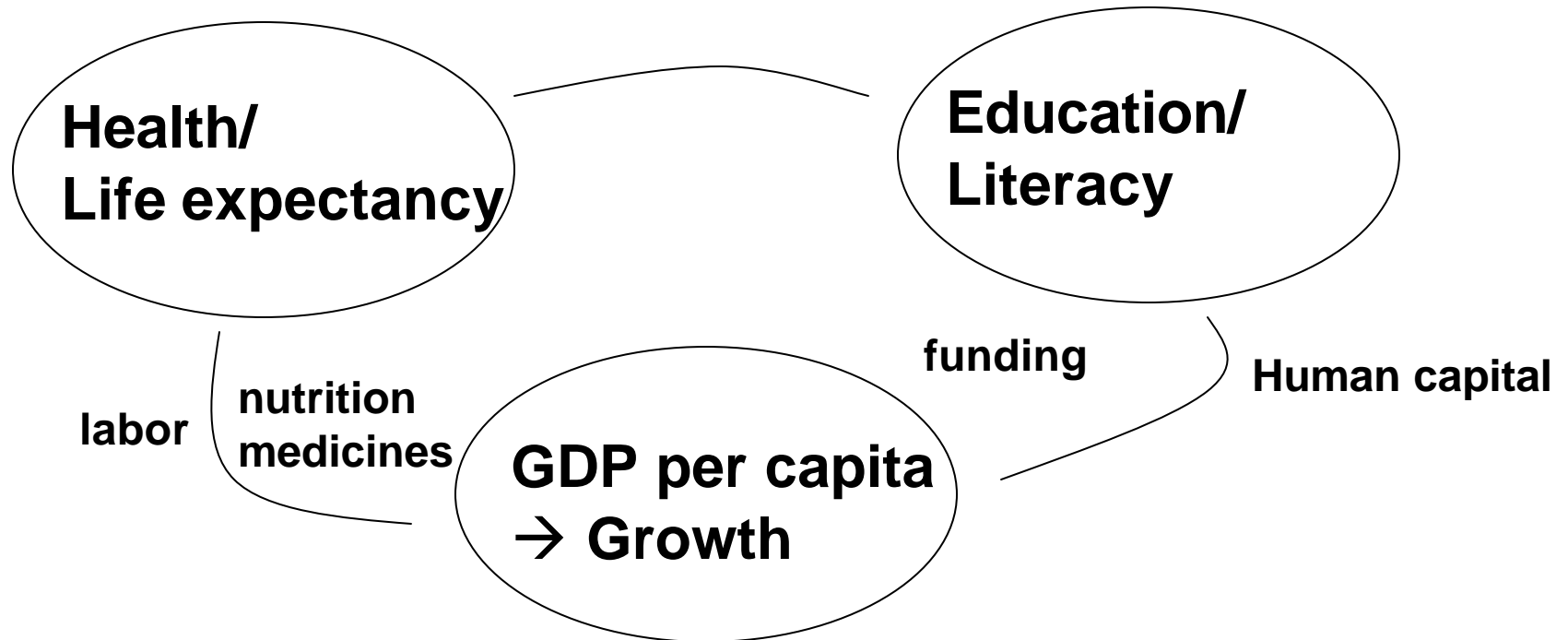
Justice and Development

- **Human development and information**
 - **More of what makes for human welfare and freedom depends on information**

HDI and Information

- Food security
- Medicines
- Research & journals
- Outcomes data

- Books, teaching materials
- Computation/communication
- Libraries
- academic centers: journals



- Growth driven by innovation & information everywhere
- Particularly for latecomers: adopting best practices

Justice and Development

- **Human development in the information society and information**
 - **More of what makes for human welfare and freedom depends on information**
 - **Capital structure of computers and communications systems diffuses the functional ability to compute and communicate**
 - **More can be done through non-market or non-IP-based mechanisms**
 - **By individuals alone**
 - **By traditional non-profits with greater reach**
 - **By newly-emerging practices of peer production**

Diverse organizational forms

Gov't

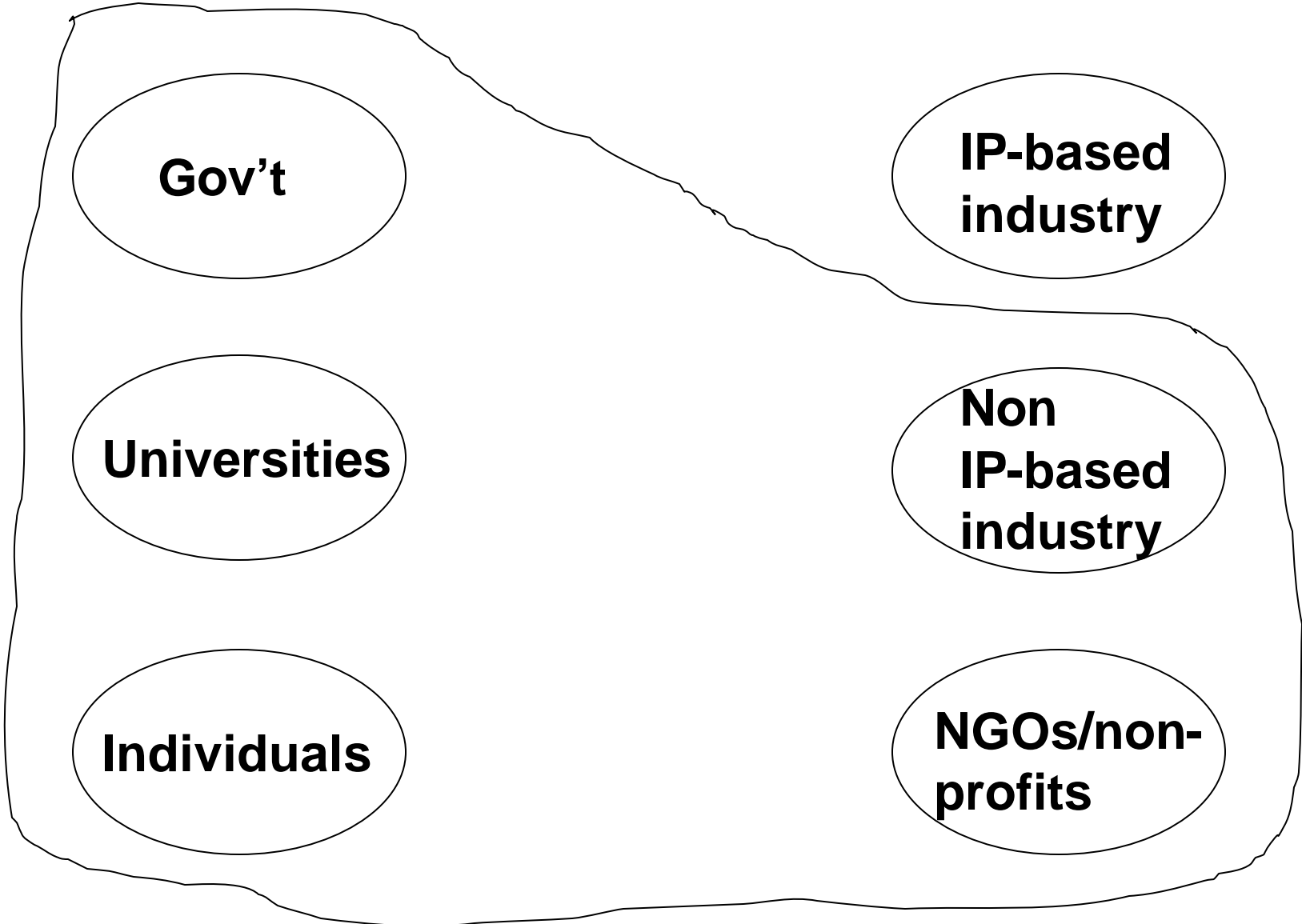
Universities

Individuals

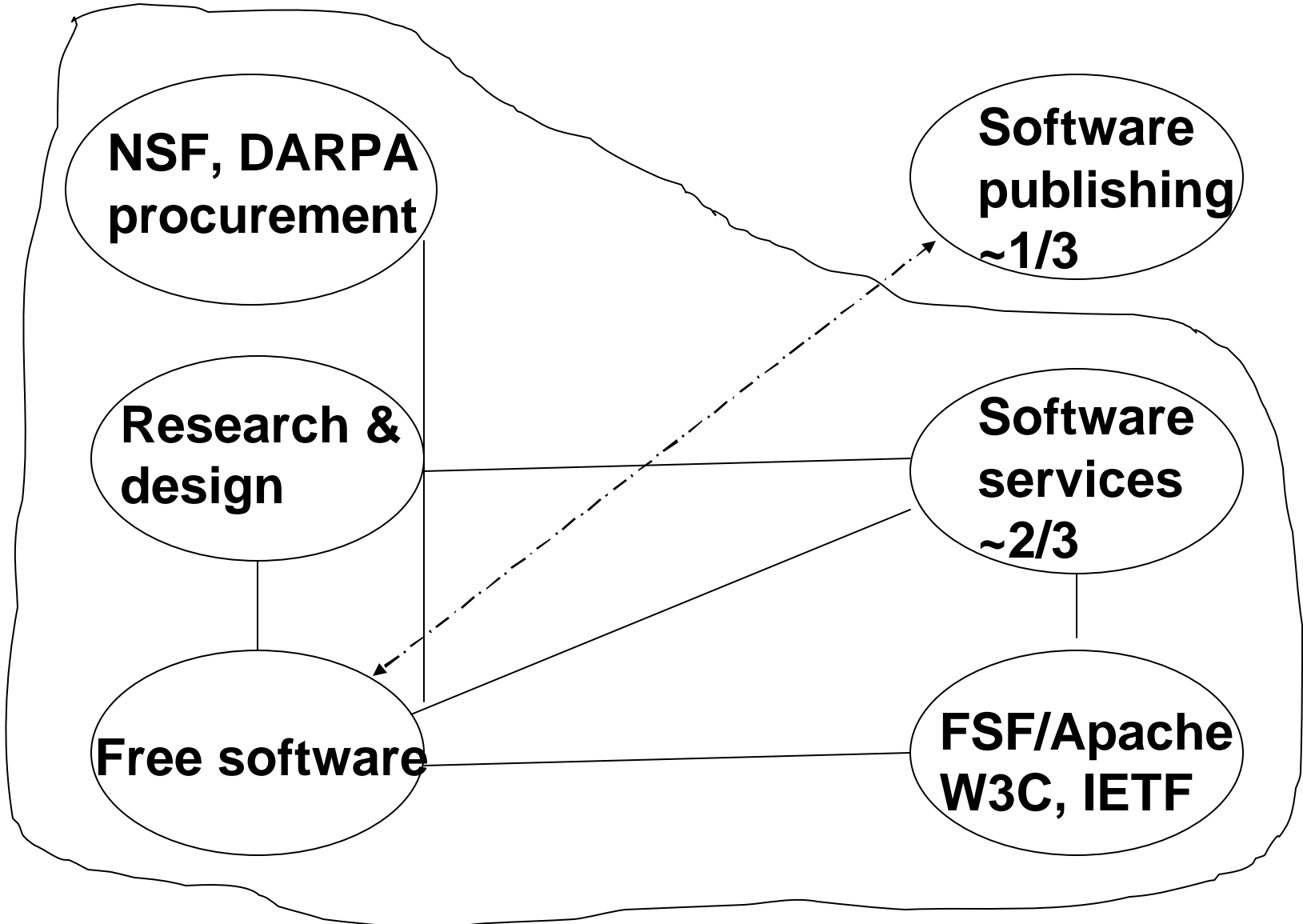
**IP-based
industry**

**Non
IP-based
industry**

**NGOs/non-
profits**



Software



Scientific Publication

NIH, NSF

Not the way
of awarding
profession based
systems, perhaps

Elsevier
professional
associations

Promotion &
tenure

With author pays for
some disciplines,
cannot fully
supplant IP-based
system

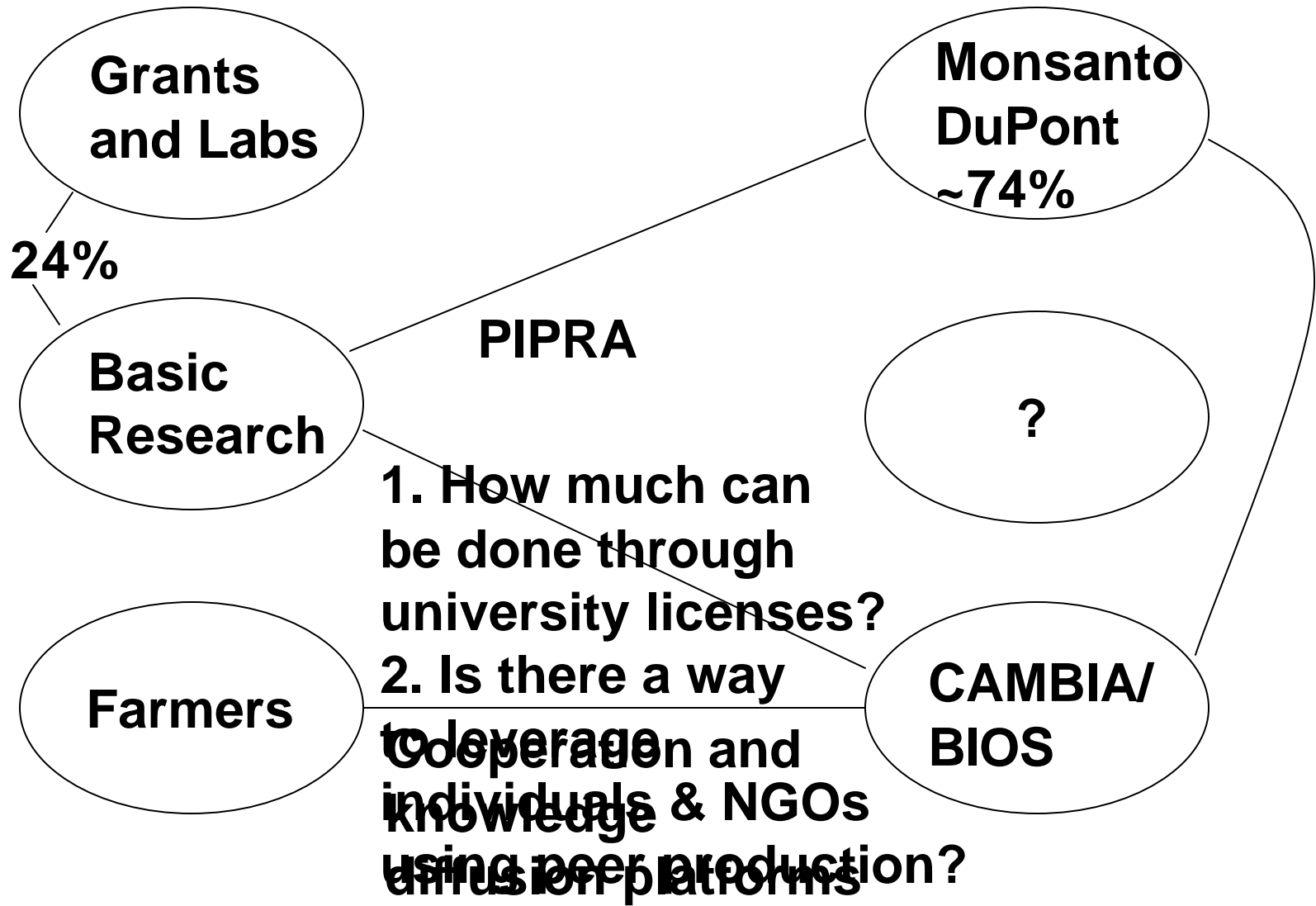
Bio-Med
Central

Working
papers, web
Based self-
publishing

Publication-based
accreditation
plays different
roles in different fields

PLoS,
ArXiv

Ag-Biotech



Health

**Grants
and Labs**

**Biotech
Big Pharma
~50%?**

**Note: Very
Interesting
because of
learning value**

**Basic
Research
~ 50%?**

**Generics
(CIPLA)**

~~**Individuals**~~

- 1. How much can be done through university licenses?**
- 2. Is there a way to leverage individuals & NGOs using peer production?**

**OneWorld
Health**

Ecological Competition

- **Giants of the industrial age will not go quietly**
- **The Enclosure Movement**
 - Property in spectrum; private infrastructure only
 - DMCA & CBDPTA: technological enclosure
 - DMCA: ISPs to recreate bottleneck
 - UCITA: contractual enclosure
=>displace copyright settlement
 - Trademark dilution: “venerated objects”
 - Software & business method patents
 - Database protection
 - Linking & trespass to chattels
 - Copyright: term extension; RAM copies & emerging right to read
 - Criminalization: NET Act

Building the Commons

Content Layer

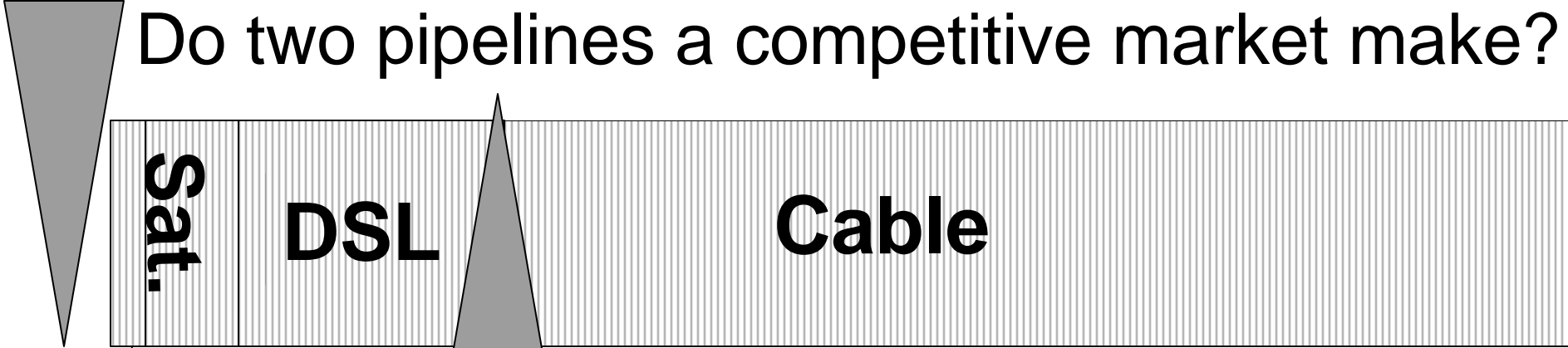
Logical Layer

Physical Layer

Physical Layer

Open Wireless Networks

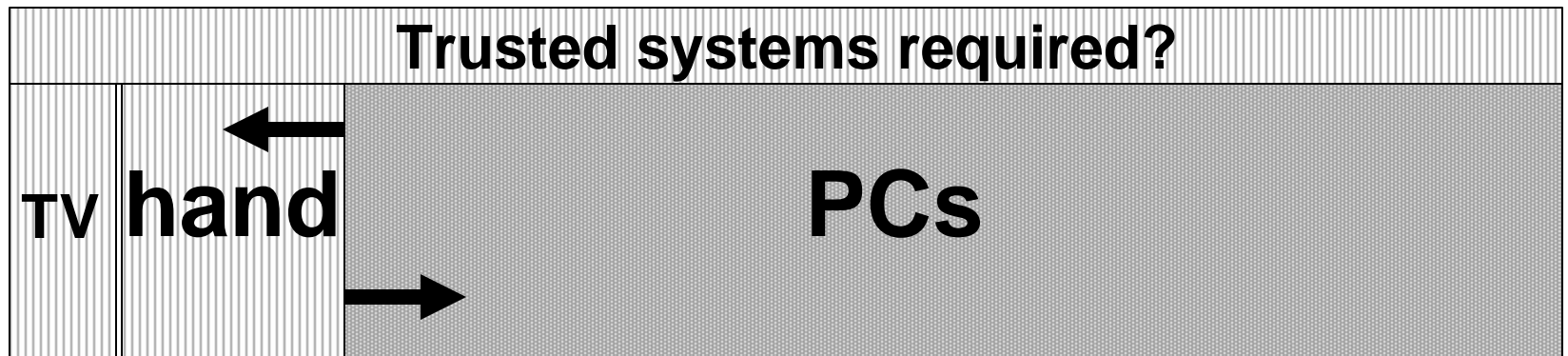
Do two pipelines a competitive market make?



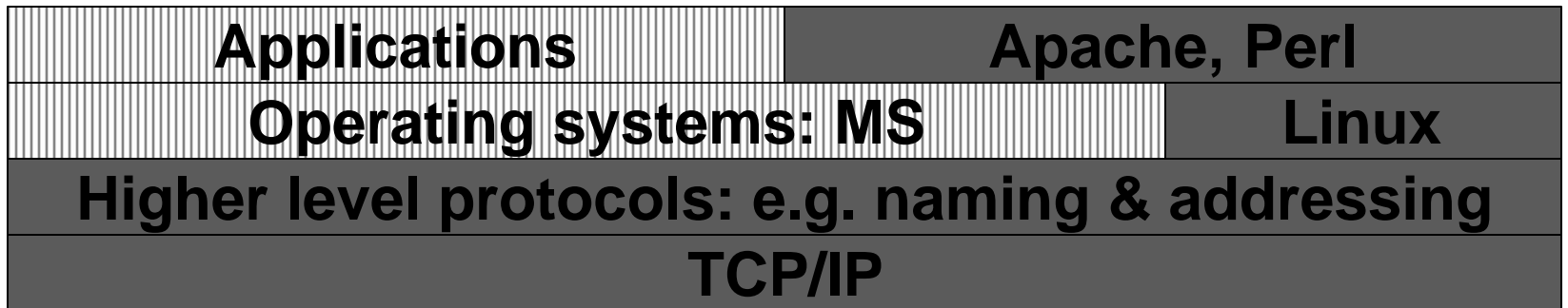
Municipal FTTH

**Lic.
wrls**

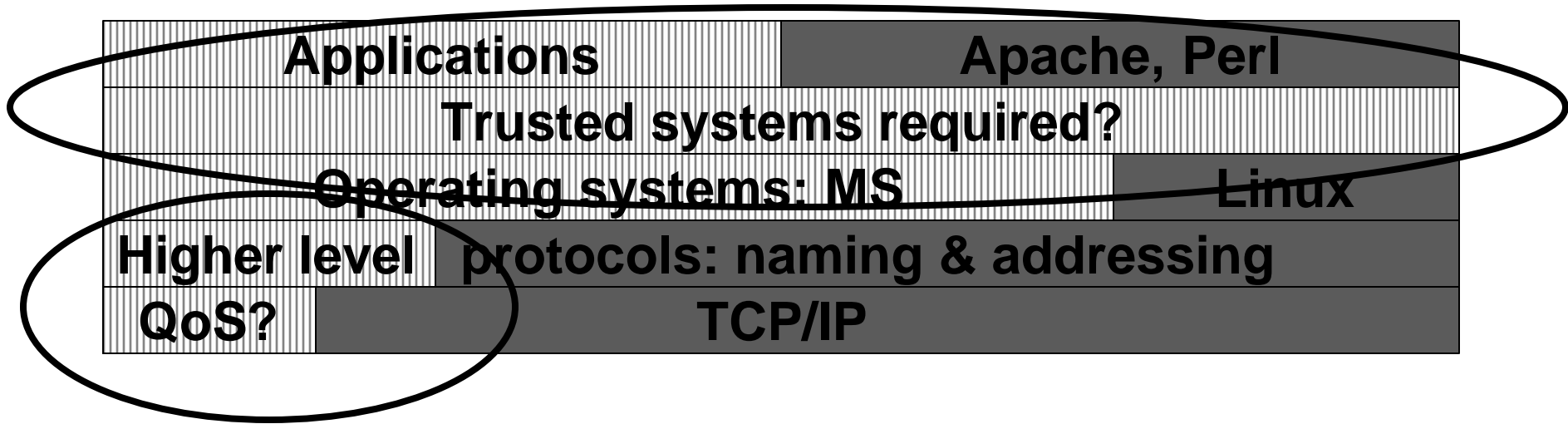
Physical Layer



Logical Layer



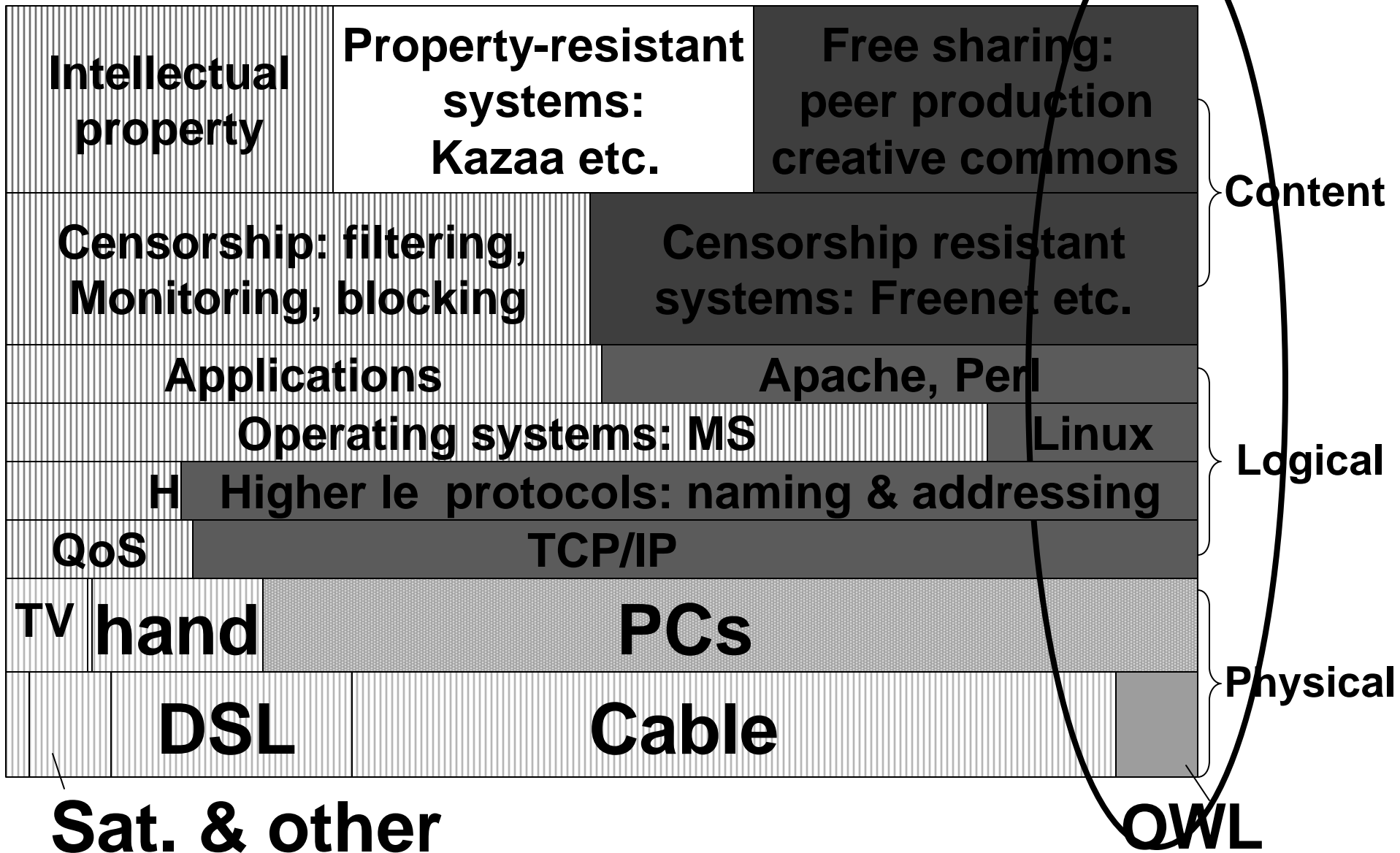
Logical Layer



Content Layer

Micky bound: strong ex- clusive rights	Property-resistant systems: Kazaa etc.	Free sharing: peer production creative commons
Censorship: filtering, monitoring, blocking		Censorship resistant systems: Freenet etc.

A core common infrastructure



A moment of opportunity

- **Technology has periods of relative openness followed by stabilization**
 - **Radio: point to point or small-scale 1899~1924/6, then the networks emerged**
 - **Telephone: 1907 competition in almost every US city, by 1920, single national monopoly**
- **We are standing at a moment where we can improve democracy, autonomy, and justice while sustaining productivity**
- **Doing so requires that we understand the moment we are in, understand the stakes of regulatory and other policy decisions we are making in terms of political morality, and have the courage and political will to choose the path of openness over the path pushed by incumbent industries**