

Words Poorly Used #12 — Simplicity

After hassling with a beyond-conceivable variety of unforeseen consequences, traveling and trying to be online, I am convinced that the market is trying to choose simplicity but has not yet succeeded. So far, the signal is that if you throw money at your problems they will go away. But since you have to throw the money first, and learn second, I'm not sure that simplicity would be the outcome. I have always felt that if the free service (that is being used as a come-on) is crappy, there is a high probability the "pro" version will leave somewhat to be desired. I have verified this, to my sorrow. The problem is that the modern economy realizes that simplicity is the desired end, but that simplicity must be reached by simulation rather than actualization. Nearly all of the technical knowledge in the world is expended on negotiation of otherwise incompatible systems. Again, as in previous blogs, I will refer you to the Tower of Babel allegory. The answer does not lie in simulating ease at the input and output ends (Murphy's Law: If it can go wrong, it will). This is what I call the Alexander Graham Bell Syndrome — use any technology you want as long as it is ours, all others need not apply. This stance of course initiates a blizzard of attempts to overcome barriers to entry. So far the blizzard has produced blizzards of sleight of hand: ie make it look as though you have choice by pushing choice and emulation out to the user interface — fake simplicity. Whether this is good is the question of the day. To me it is not so good.

Kilgore