

Geert Lovink on the Social Media Abyss by Jorge San Vicente Feduchi

English:

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The hypnotic documentary *Hypernormalization*, by British director Adam Curtis, takes its name from a concept developed by Soviet writer Alexei Yurchak. In his book *Everything was Forever, Until it was No More*, Yurchak describes the tense social and cultural atmosphere during the years prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. [As Curtis describes](#), after decades of attempting to plan and manage a new kind of socialist society, the technocrats at the top of the post-Stalinist USSR realized that their goal of controlling and predicting everything was unreachable. Unwilling to admit their failure, they “began to pretend that everything was still going according to plan”. The official narrative created a parallel version of the Soviet society, a fake reality (like in the home videos of Good Bye Lenin) that everyone would eventually unveil. But even though they saw that the economy was trembling and the regime’s discourse was fictitious, the population had to play along and pretend it was real... “because no one could imagine any alternative. (...) You were so much a part of the system that it was impossible to see beyond it”.

Nowadays, our society is driven by very different forces. We don’t need technocrats to predict our actions; the last advancements in information technology, in addition to our constant disposition to share everything that happens to us, are enough for an invisible —and, apparently, non-human— power to define and limit our behaviour. In his book *Social Media Abyss*, the Dutch theorist **Geert Lovink** —founding director of the Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam— speaks about the dark side of these new technologies and the consequences of our blind trust in the digital industry.

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