Abstract

We are entering an era of information revolution subscribe to a world culture immersed in electronic technology. Information technology is embarking on a period of exponential growth. Cyberspace and technological advances in computer telecommunications in general are changing the way our society works, learns and socializes. Society, for the first time, is no longer dependent solely on physical location to shape its different modes of interaction. The physical networks for social and cultural interaction have been replaced by invisible networks of fiber optics and other information infrastructure. The role of architecture, traditionally associated with space, place and material has been disassociated from these new modes of human interaction.

What happens when the ideology of electronic technologies replaces the traditional notion of architectural context? How will the importance of the real experience of the architectural realm be imparted to a culture fascinated by the technology the information age has to offer?

We have thus arrived at a paradoxical crossroad - if one of the classic functions of architecture has been to help make our thoughts about technology legible or even to define them, how can we go about making architecture about the loss of physical technology if architecture has usually required technology to assert its presence?
It is at this technological juncture of telecommunication, information access and architecture that this paper is sited. Many facets of cyberspace as it is variously conceived are discussed in Michael Benedikt's Cyberspace: First Steps. In this paper, I will restrict the concept of cyberspace to an architectural discourse which focuses on the issues of reconciling cyberspace with architectural space. The study researches and draws upon different views by notable architects, particularly Marcos Novak, to hypothesize the impact of information technologies on indeterminate forms of architecture whose invisible attributes are as important if not more important than any physical or formal aspects.

The introduction to this paper establishes the paradigm shift from the mechanical to the electronic and suggest the possible evolution of a new branch of architecture which is concerned with pure design not limited by the nature of physical materials. The subsequent chapters set out, first to investigate the issues that arise when we embrace cyberspace as a new realm of habitation and the redefinition of the classical descriptions of architecture. Secondly, it traces the social transformation in response to the electronic realm. Finally, the paper discusses methods for the occupation of the space of information and speculates upon the evolutionary path of this emergent form of architecture.