

A Discussion of R. F. Abler's Paper on Technology in Place : Real Virtuality

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I am very honored to be here to discuss Dr. Abler's paper: *Technology in Place: Real Virtuality*. I think it is a valuable paper for this conference in the age of information.

This paper introduces neologism in applying for information technology to geography. New terminology is "real virtuality", it is a replica of places and processes in the world which is created by using information technologies. Unlike virtual reality, real virtuality emphasizes the use of information technologies in place in the lived world rather than in a simulator or video room. Map, satellite- and GPS-based navigation systems are the products of real virtuality. These products expand our experience in the living environment via information technologies which bring a variety of information together to help us manage immediate tasks at hand. As I understand, Information technologies underlying real virtuality involve computers, information network and high-quality visual displays etc. like GIS, GPS, Remote Sensing, and Internet. Dr. Abler insists these technologies enhance research, teaching, and practice in geography. I agree with this point.

I have some suggestions and comments on his paper.

First of all, in order to implement geographical research using information technology, most

geographers want to be familiar with information technology as well as good insight and strong background in geography discipline. If we emphasize on information technology in our geographical research, it is necessary to discriminate geographical research from other discipline's. Geographical analysis shares data, methods and theories with urban planning, landscape architecture, and environmental science. For example, spatial data, spatial statistics and location-allocation model are analyzed and interpreted by geographers as well as scholars of other fields. It is very important for geography and geographers to (re)invent geographical techniques of analyzing and interpreting the shared data set in a geographic method and theory. Dr. Abler, Would you please give some suggestions to make distinction "geography" from other fields? Especially when we emphasize on information technologies.

In another perspective on this paper, Dr. Abler anticipate that widespread use of real virtuality by geographers will change their use of data, methods and theory in research and practice. I think the nature of disciplines change with technology. At this point, I would like to learn how we may explore the data, method and theory for area studies, especially in contemporary context different from traditional geography, even though Dr. Abler briefly mentioned

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about this aspects in the morning

I think it is a better summerize 2 questions in my discussion:

① How do you differentiate geography from other disciplinary fields in using and applying information technology in order to improve our understanding of

area studies.

②As real virtuality is used widely by geographers how do you alter the use of data, method, and theory in comparison with those of traditional geography?

Thank you.