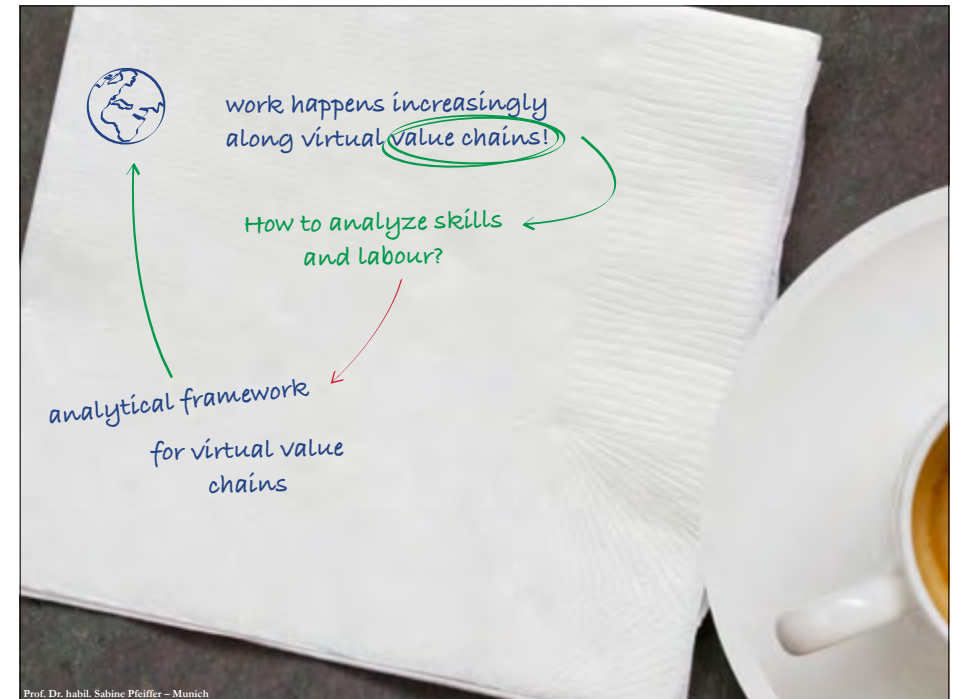


Labour and skills along webbased value chains

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As the Internet continues to develop we see...

...perennial proclamations of novelty

...ever new, Web-inspired, socio-theoretical diagnoses of the times

(Hardt & Negri, 2000, 2009; Castells, 2000; Rainie & Wellman, 2012).

The dominant discourse has it that...

...the Internet is changing not only society but also its economic underpinnings.

...digitized value creation embraces more and more areas

...the Internet is shaking the very foundations of our economy (Sharma, Krishan & Grewal, 2001).

...E-commerce is a boom similar to the Industrial Revolution (Drucker, 1999).

Example: Converse Create Website

Converse „create“ website lets customers design their sneakers customized down to the individual seam.

Should a “digital native” customer in Brooklyn design a totally customized pair of sneakers, this one-of-a-kind item will cost little more than a normal Converse sneaker and will be in the customer's hands within four weeks.



How many highly paid knowledge workers?

How many work for what wages and under what conditions in the retail outlets?

Who conceives the online marketing strategies, who programs and designs the websites for them?

Who programs the interface that permits a smooth transfer of the customer-generated data from Converse's "create" website into the Beijing-based contract manufacturer's order system?

What difference does it make for a underpaid sweatshop worker that the shoe is customer designed?

Are these employees in Nike's e-commerce department, well paid Palo Alto "digital natives" or off-shore IT service providers in Bangalore?

How can we make it so there is not only a value chain, but a labour and skills chain, too?

And how this human labour generates the value that superficially seems to stem from the Web somehow.

Substantial changes of work along the value chain

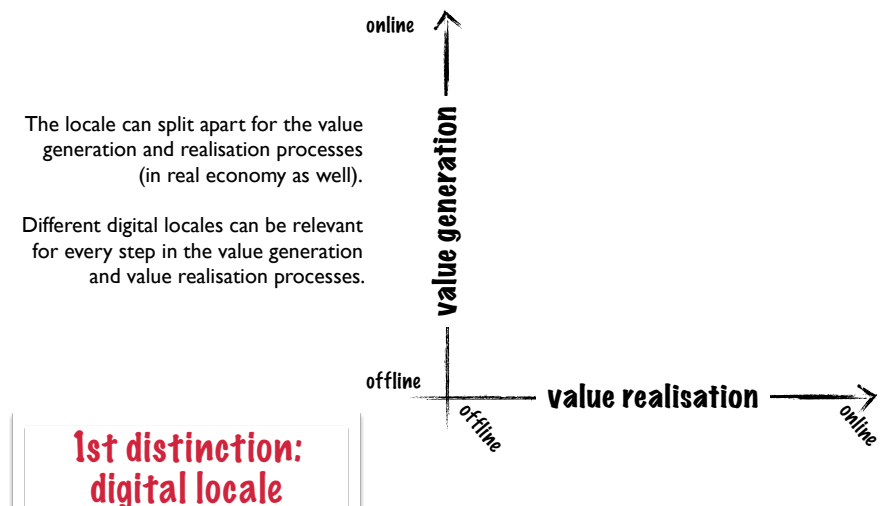
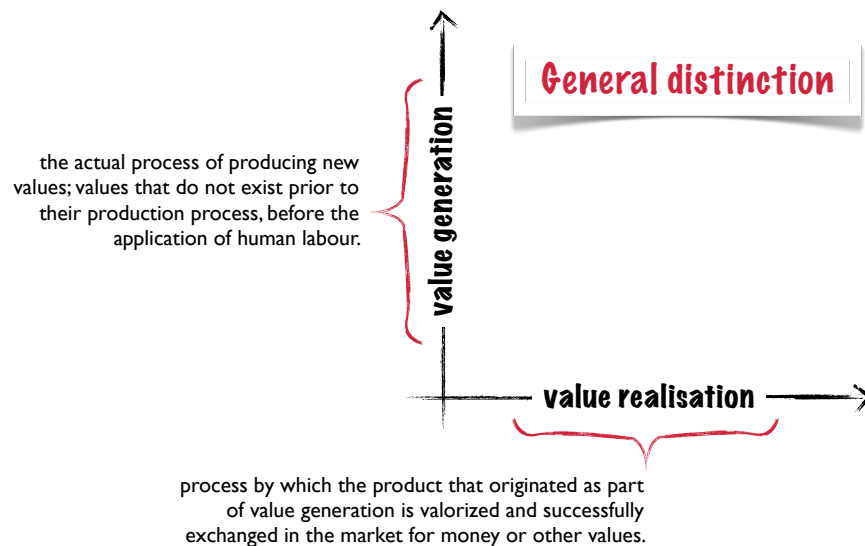
"anyone in the chain who produces and distributes knowledge products" and in between is found a steadily **growing army** of employees who "handle, distribute and convey information and knowledge" (McKercher & Mosco, 2010).

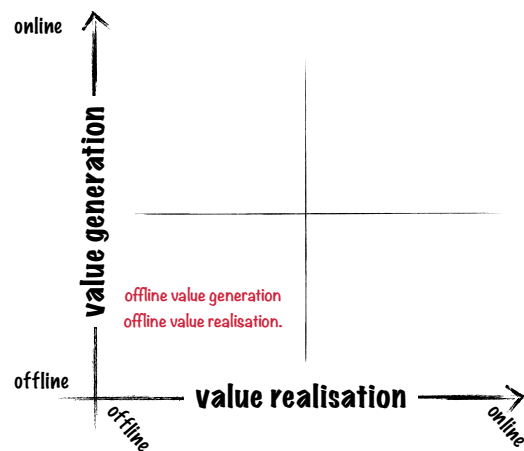
All those tasks are **increasingly interconnected along the global value chain**, and modularization and standardization are applied progressively so that these connections can be "managed as seamlessly as possible" (Huws, 2012:2).

This sort of **standardization** no longer just reaches into the production area, but meanwhile also impinges on the creative processes of innovation work (Pfeiffer, Sauer & Wühr, 2012; Pfeiffer, Schütt & Wühr, 2010).

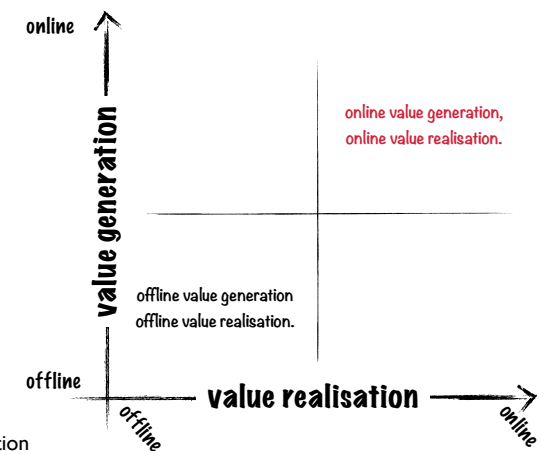
-> analyzing work along virtual value chains

-> analyzing the qualitative value of labour and skills

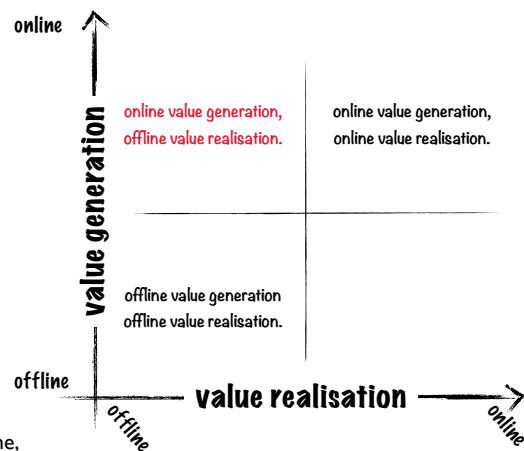




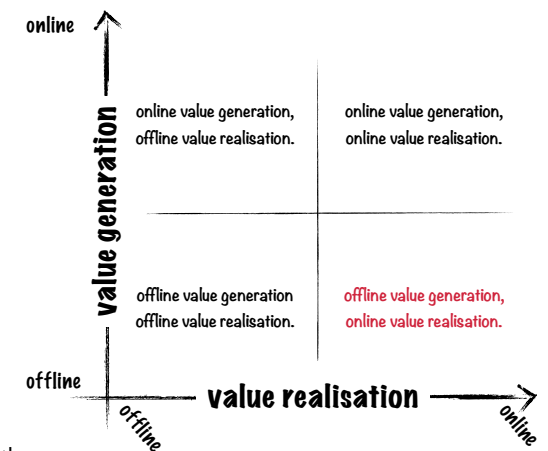
Value generation and value realisation both happen offline:
a book is produced in the print shop and offered in the bookstore or library.



Value generation and value realisation both happen online:
several co-authors collaborate on an online platform in writing a novel that later becomes available online.



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