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The Semantic Web: Your Web's Smarter Younger Brother PDF [Share](#)

New + Notable by Tom Robinson

The Semantic Web is also known as Web 3.0 and the Data Web and the Deep Web. It's not artificial intelligence. This new iteration of web is, however, "smarter" in that it makes more intuitive connections between data.

Tony Shaw is a semantic web expert. He is editor of [Semantic Universe Journal](#) and educational chairman of [SemTech](#), the world's largest semantic technology conference (that starts June 21 in San Francisco). He cautions against over-selling Web 3.0 as more than a better mouse trap. On the other hand, he says the technology enables users to do amazing things without having to understand how it works.

Apparently it is "a source to retrieve information from the Web [using the web spiders from RDF files](#) and [accessing the data through Semantic Web Agents](#) or Semantic Web Services."



I don't know exactly how, but the Semantic Web can tell the difference between [Paris Hilton](#) (hotel) and [Paris Hilton](#) (cheeky celebrity) whereas yesterday's Web doesn't. I will just accept that the tech heads who do will make life better for me and you.



Mr. Shaw made a reverse-order-Letterman-style list of nine such ways:

9. Annoying ads that have nothing to do with your interests will disappear.
8. Your computer will understand you through [natural language recognition](#). When you tell it you want directions to that restaurant on Main Street with the amazing French onion soup, it will know what you're talking about.
7. All of your computers will become more intuitive and easier to use.
6. Your bank will implement semantically-driven fraud monitoring systems. And your credit card company won't erroneously reject your charges for a meal in London ever again, because it will understand that you bought airline tickets to England.
5. New types of consumer products will emerge that allow you to connect to your doctors and other medical experts globally. That means you'll get a faster diagnosis of your illness and a wider array of better treatment options available to you.
4. Semantic technology will reshape the job market. Data gathering jobs will transform into data utilizing jobs. With less grunt work to do, our jobs will become more about innovation, development, and creativity.
3. Semantically-enabled open government will mean you'll have better access to government info and that the government will have better access to its own info, which is currently fragmented across branches, bureaus, departments, and private researchers. This has already started with [Recovery.gov](#) and [data.gov](#), web sites which make all sorts of government data available to the public.
2. You'll be able to keep your own private health record throughout your life time. If you're sick you'll be able to compare your symptoms to those of lots of other patients (anonymously of course) and have your doctor make a virtual house call without getting out of bed. A perpetually updated database of health data could allow the prediction and prevention of epidemics, the optimization of treatment methods, and drastic cuts in healthcare costs.
1. You'll feel safer and be safer, because intelligence agencies and law-enforcement will be able to identify threats faster and more accurately.

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Implications for colleges and universities

Here's my list of killer uses on campus.

6. Research libraries already use this technology to connect disparate scientific databases.
5. Students will be able to do class-related research faster and more comprehensively so they can spend more energy on data analysis and writing.
4. Matching technology will appear in new generation job boards to create intuitive profiles and match applicants and schools that are good fits for each other.
3. Career Services will tailor internship and post-graduation employment placements based on curriculum and employer needs.
2. Fundraisers will make their time and effort more productive with better predictive alumni-related models.
1. Safety officers will coordinate more effectively with community law enforcement, public health officials and environmental planners.

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