

## Summary

### **Old and New Metaphors of the Internet**

How do its users perceive the Internet and how is this reflected in the specific language used to describe the virtual universe of cyberspace, which is based on various metaphorical concepts? Why has metaphor become a useful explanatory tool for people nowadays when describing the phenomenon of the Internet and its many uses? Finally, how is it that exactly this metaphorical concept plays the role of what has so far been an irreplaceable tool, one that people at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first century are attempting in various ways to tame and define this extraordinary medium?

Prof. Marek Hendrykowski conducts an in-depth analysis of a series of metaphors of the Internet: both those belonging to the original categories (Web, domain, digital space-time, navigation, forum, the information superhighway, etc.) and those constantly emerging and newly created. Hendrykowski believes these metaphors of the Web are, in fact, testimonies of an intriguing discourse going on since its beginning relating to recognizing and defining the social functions of this extraordinary tool. The ever-present question of its human or dehumanised (*ergo* inhuman) nature lies in the background to this discourse. Does this invention co-create or does it make shallow, destroy, distort and destroy the deeper meaning of our world, participating in its disintegration and destruction?

The Internet – as a creation of modern humanity, its next multifunctional extension and, at the same time, a new sphere of anthropocultural assimilation – is full of contradictions. Once tangibly close, at other times it seems distant, alien and

threatening. We are only now trying to become accustomed to it, make the most of it in practical terms and recognise its many possibilities. As an omnipresent element and participant of collective life, the Web therefore requires constant reflections and social mediation. This is what the metaphors are referring to, each in their own way.

*Translated by Rob Pagett*