

# Principle FIVE

# P5

Yorkshire Co-operative Resource Centre

November 2025

Co-operative alternatives to Big Tech

<https://mail.coop/>

<https://www.webarchitects.coop/about>

Both are co-operatives

A co-operative provider of Broadband and telecom services is:

<https://broadband.yourcoop.coop/>

The problem with our dependence on Big Tech (example: Google, Microsoft and Yahoo etc.) goes well beyond the issue of what software or platform we should be using. Over the last twenty years, capitalism has transformed itself through Internet technologies, giving it a new medium to re-enforce the values of individualism and competition over collaboration and community. Capitalist developed technologies have strengthened a consumerist, disposable culture at odds with any vision of sustainability. At the same time, these technologies have become entrenched in our daily lives. They

shape our actions, our emotions and contribute to a narrative of how the world works.

And finally, modern technology is central to every major political issue we face. Without directly confronting the capitalist technology narrative, we have little chance of making an impact on any of the issues central to building a just and sustainable world.

### **Media and democracy**

It is unclear whether any government has successfully altered an election by manipulating social media sites, however the threat is credible. Additionally, any confusion over why Elon Musk purchased Twitter is now clear: social media platforms have become the new media monopolies.

As the Internet went from an independent media utopia to another centralized media monopoly, the one Internet medium that has managed to survive as a method for reaching a mass audience is email. However, while email can function in a distributed manner, 2/3 of all email accounts are controlled by Google, Microsoft and Yahoo.

Moving our mailboxes to autonomous providers is a crucial step towards preserving one of the oldest and most reliable ways of reaching large numbers of people.

<https://riseagainstbig.tech/>

<https://in.fra.red/>



Email



Email



Broadband



### **Amnesty launches 'Breaking up with Big Tech' briefing**

Amnesty International has launched a new briefing titled '[Breaking up with Big Tech](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/08/amnesty-launches-breaking-up-with-big-tech-briefing/)' calling on governments to rein in the power of Big Tech companies in order to safeguard human rights.

The so-called big five tech companies - **Alphabet (Google), Meta, Microsoft, Amazon, and Apple** - wield extraordinary influence over the infrastructure, services, and norms that shape our online lives. These companies dominate key sectors of the internet: from search engines and social media to app stores and cloud computing. Their largely unchecked power across various digital sectors poses serious risks to the right to privacy, the right to non-discrimination, freedom of opinion and access to information.

This briefing shows how these Big Tech companies have built their power, how they maintain it and how they are now moving to consolidate it further in emerging areas of artificial intelligence.

Briefing in Full:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/08/amnesty-launches-breaking-up-with-big-tech-briefing/>

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**The Great Energy Swindle: How Your Bills Will Subsidize Big Tech's Data Center Bonanza**

**Government's 90% Electricity Discount Scheme: A Corporate Giveaway Dressed as Industrial Policy**

<https://europeanpowell.substack.com/p/the-great-energy-swindle-how-your>

Thanks to John Carlisle for this information.

Rita Rhodes: An Excellent Co-operative Woman (1934-2025)

Roger Spear

This tribute to Rita was published by

**[The UK Society for Co-operative Studies](#)**

Rita was involved with co-operatives from an early age — it was a regular childhood routine for her and her mother to go shopping in the local Co-op on Saturday mornings. When her parents were married her paternal grandmother gave them two shares in the London Co-operative Society; and later her mother took a mortgage from the Co-operative Permanent Building Society (now Nationwide). They lived in a two up two down semi-detached cottage with an outside wash house and toilet.

Her father worked on the railways (London North Eastern Railway); but managed to save money and rent a field for horses, pigs, ducks, chickens, geese, and even a goat! Eventually they managed to buy the field from the local farmer and had the good fortune of it increasing in value. This frugal upbringing influenced Rita's attitude to life; growing up during the war involved rationing. At school she didn't pass the 11+ plus exam so went to a secondary modern school.

Read the complete article **[HERE](#)**

**The Author**

Roger Spear is Emeritus Professor of Social Entrepreneurship, Member of Ciriec Scientific Committee, and founder member and ex-vice-president of EMES research network on social enterprise. He taught innovation, organisational systems, and research methods at the Open University. Most recently he was for 10 years guest professor in the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Roskilde University (Denmark), contributing to an International Masters in Social Entrepreneurship.

## Co-operative Fiction in the Principle 5 Library

Jericho. Pat Arrowsmith

Purple Plague. Fenner Brockway

Red Liner (a play) made for TV. Fenner Brockway

Henry Ashton: how the co-operative commonwealth  
was established. R. A. Dague

Ecotopia. Ernest Callenbach

The Co-opolitan. Zebina Forbush

News From Nowhere. William Morris

The English Utopia. A. L. Morton

The World in a Department Store. Bradford Peck

Hell's Paradise. Hjalmar Rutzebeck

Co-op: a novel of living together. Upton Sinclair

The Millennium : a comedy of the year 2000

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**workers**  
**.coop**

a UK-based federation of worker co-ops, founded in 2022. As the network and voice for worker cooperation, we bring co-ops and supporters together as a movement, to advance our shared interests and become stronger.

<https://www.workers.coop/>

Members are always welcome to visit Principle 5 co-operative resource centre. We look forward to seeing you.

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