Proposal
ATTN: Gen. Starks

PYRAMID

Mass Data Collection for Analysis and Simulation
for the Advancement of American Cultural,
Political, and Economic Control

Haplo Industries

Stanton Hampton, Rapporteur
October 1995

SUMMARY

New digital communication tools depend upon mass wiring infrastructure (telephone lines, underground cables) to transmit data. Haplo Industries proposes partnership with the US Department of Defense to amass content and "metadata" from phone and computer network communications using our majority ownership of world wiring infrastructures. "Metadata" is information about a communication instead of its content: its origin, destination, time of transmission, etc., which is embedded in newer computer protocols such as TCP/IP and Appletalk. By 2020, the United States should possess full or near full control over technologies on which peoples domestic and foreign will increasingly rely for trade, cultural *communiqués*, and statecraft.

PYRAMID is based on observable trends in usage of communication technologies as computers have become mainstream during the 1990s. Private sector entrepreneurs innovate these technologies with low-level mercantile considerations (proprietary protocols, trade secrets, etc) characteristic of a class unaccustomed to anticipating broader patterns of societal change. They exercise a startling amount of power, and it is risky to trust them with responsibilities of self-governance.

Decisive government influence over these technologies will allow the United States to control the "ghost in the machine" or "identity patterns" that influence cultural and political trends. Identity patterns have been traditionally regarded as innate or essential (e.g. the self, psyche, or soul); however, we now know that they are the sum of observable behaviors. Given the predicted mainstream adoption of computer network communication, mass data collection will log behaviors on an unprecedented scale. Distilling such data will grant us access to people's identities directly. We can analyze metadata and information content to build reliable models of discrete selves in the interest of modeling collective behaviors.

The above process will serve as the basis of a radical new predictive model. Information culled from surveillance will render simulations of populations. Analysts or analytic intelligences may then consult the simulations as true oracles to slim the margin of error in their predictions of cultural and political trends. Analysis of repeated simulations will vouchsafe our control over American and, eventually, global concerns.

Funding in the amount of ███████████ is requested to construct the PYRAMID facility, a server base to house gathered information as well as the analytic intelligences.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Networked computer communications (hereafter referred to as "the Internet") operates as an unguarded tool of social messaging, a vehicle for postmodern discourse. A relative

minority of Americans interact via networked computers using commercial services such as AOL and Compuserve. Danger lies in more easily manipulable formats such as Usenet and the budding World Wide Web. These open means of networking connect Americans to individuals globally. When such different views of the world collide, an unpredictable amalgam of values and decisions will surely follow.

A medium of undifferentiated access to differentiated ideas promotes mass disorientation sure to result either in a confusion of truth into moral relativism (conflicting ideas exist side by side, therefore either truth is correct because neither silences the other) or cloistered absolutism (conflicting ideas exist side by side, therefore my truth is correct because my side can affirm itself by shuttering out opposing points of view). Any middling state is merely the potential to turn dissolute or rigid, as indicated above.

Alternatively, new tensions may arise locally as participants view their neighbors less as people and more as collections of opinions. Historically, ideological polarization has occurred only in geographically *separated* populations. Populations who share space may develop syncretic cultures, which, as a survival trait, either develop tolerance toward opposing ideas or incorporate opposing ideas into new structures. Alternatively, dominant ideas will destroy weaker ideas whether through war or propaganda. Importantly, however, these phenomena unfold when peoples live in proximity to each other.

We stand on the cusp of violence. Networked communications make volatile disagreement possible without geographical population segregation. One's neighbor with whom one disagrees is still one's physical neighbor, but he is depersonalized by the abstraction of his identity into his opinion online. Promises of a "virtual reality" may, at some future time, remedy the depersonalization of ideas by giving visual personae or "avatars" through which online users can anthropomorphize others' writing. We cannot wait for these developments, however, since the technology that precedes "virtual reality" will create new, unforeseen societal tensions.

The effects of these changes in discourse will prove disastrous to traditional governmental models of geography-based sovereignty and the normal processes of cultural development. Class tensions may rise when normally less ambitious, more concrete-minded lower classes with no real sense of their situations develop solidarity independent of geographical isolation. Civil disasters in the name of empty egalitarianism will surely follow.

Currently, 16 million people use the internet for professional, financial, educational, and personal needs (viz. ideological affirmation, community growth, etc) – a mere 0.4% of the global population. According to our best predictive models, the userbase stands to grow to 200 million people by 2010. The numbers include citizens American and otherwise, along with governments globally. The danger is viral; the world is at risk.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PYRAMID is a multi-front strategy for collecting and storing data. Analysis of stored data will proceed under supervision of programs other than PYRAMID.

We propose the construction of an underground facility located within the United States. Please see the accompanying plans for prototype schematics of its design.

Our program will move in phases. Each strategy will complement those that came before. We will begin by manipulating software, with the ultimate goal of directly controlling network infrastructures. Software invasion will begin the process of collecting information from systems, while infrastructural dominance will make us the system.

First, we will enact strategies of Computer Network Exploitation whereby government and Haplo designed malicious software leaches data. Encryption protocols are used largely by ARPA and other classified organizations, so we can read the leached data easily. Problematically, this leaves closed, wired intranets inaccessible. Cracking closed intranets will definitely be a goal of infrastructural dominance.

Control over infrastructure must have global ambitions. Major international competitors such as Russia will require detailed, flexible strategies, so our initial infrastructural goals will target Second World countries. These governments are eager to rise into the First World. Given their current inability to improve their situations, we may assume that they will not be able to engineer technology compatible with First World networks.

Russia will no doubt race to dominate that market with their network hardwares, and we must ensure that American routers and switches become the basic Second World standard. We can bug exported technology that enables us to intercept their communications with themselves and, importantly, with our First World competitors. Even if we cannot directly access Russia's communications, we can learn the outlines of their internal conversations by intercepting their outgoing communications.

Targets will also include individuals whose ideologies become volatile when sympathetic, like-minded people organize. Dissidents, economic reformers, social radicals, and labor organizers are examples. These people would not have been able to collaborate across geographical obstacles before the internet, and the increased capability to communicate opens dangerous possibilities.

We must also anticipate the public's awareness of PYRAMID. We must assume that a whistleblower will alert the public at some undetermined time, and we can use media messaging to soften that blow. Hobbyists are culturally distrusted as "nerds" or anti-social obsessives. We can mark these individual, comparatively disorganized hackers as threats. We can also make private corporations, considered responsible for their own products, take public scorn and deflect attention away from our operations.

When parts of the program enter public knowledge, we can use the court system to dominate media attention before PYRAMID comes to light. Consider this "justice theater." Make court cases and individuals more important than the issues. When that layer fails, use public debate about the issues through news networks as another layer of attention. Generate as much debate about the debate as possible.

Ideally, we will be able to cultivate a mass-surveillance culture. Categories such as "innocent" and "suspect" will become flexible, and their plasticity will be enforced by the population themselves. Specific measures toward this goal are TBD.