

SUPER INFLAMMATION HIGHWAY: Deep sixin' the media hype

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I have received several comments about the title of my last article for *The Print*, "Information Superhighway paves its way to Clackamas." This gives the impression that the article's content



concerns Internet resources available at Clackamas Community College.

Some people expressed surprise at finding the article was instead a history of the Internet's beginning.

I am sorry for the inconsistency. I do not write the titles, only the articles. In retrospect, I should have made an opportunity for myself to look at the title before the paper went to print. I will attempt to do this in the future, to avoid any further confusion or controversy.

The use of the term, Information Superhighway, is regrettable. I find it to be something of a misnomer.

The term was invented by members of government, and of industry, to describe integration of cable and telephone services through reregulation.

The concept was to create a superstructure for a national video-phone system, and remove cut-throat industry competition. The term attempted to capture the spirit of the national phone system, and the national highway building projects.

The idea was to provide better interconnection, and increased funds for 'New Deal'-type construction projects, to boost economic and technological growth.

The concept was seriously flawed from the beginning. Different standards and the technological limitations make the integration of cable (broadcast vision) and telephone (two-way sound) difficult, high impossible.

Fiber optics was envisioned as the solution; providing a wider band width (so more services could be included), and a medium for developing a new communication standard.

The fiber optic superhighway would require replacing the aging



copper communication trunk lines, between major population centers. For the full implementation, fiber optics would have to run from the trunk lines to each building. This proved to be prohibitively expensive for the debt-ridden, post Cold War, government.

The media began a specula-

tive extrapolation of what the Information Superhighway entails. (It's the future media that will change the way we receive information and seek entertainment.) A dream of global communications making the world a better place to live. (Working, shopping and banking at home would make regular transit unnecessary.

People could tap a broader spectrum of humanity from their own home, a ever could be achieved in a lifetime of world travel. etc. etc. etc....) The terms Information Superhighway and Internet quickly became interchangeable, as the lines between fact and fantasy blurred.

Recently, computer industry development of smaller products,

requires security on a scale that is missing from the current Internet. Many companies working individually, and cooperatively, are attempting to produce security systems.

These (propriety) systems will use encryption, masking, and



evasion techniques to prevent interpretation, interception or corruption of data. The data could be bank funds, as well as private documents or proprietary programs. Using electronic funds one

creative benefits of mankind.

The founding spirit of the Internet was of free interaction for mutual benefit. The idea of informational freedom still permeates the Internet today, but corporate greed is tampering with it. Commercialization threatens not only to exclude the poor but to create class distinctions within the Internet itself.

The security systems being developed today could open the door to some horrific possibilities.

History has proven that power belongs to those people with the control of money production and key resources. The development of secure monetary systems in the hands of private corporations. Who will look out for the under-

cal development, it is important to possess knowledge in a timely manner so resources can be used wisely. (Our power to manipulate exceeds our knowledge of proper control.)

To retain power, governments must control information. How



would one go about controlling information? In the past, governments (like Nazi Germany, Stalin's Russia, and the United States during the red scare) suppressed the truth and reason, and replaced it with stereotypes and hate ideals.

For the first time in history, there is a medium of mass communication that is too large, uncontrolled and international, that it cannot be controlled.

The U.S. is attempting to regain that control (or trying to feel like it is regaining that control) by requiring all computers produced in the US to have a Clipper Chip built in. The Clipper Chip creates a 'back door' in any encryption scheme. The 'back door' would give access to the government (or the inventive hacker) so encrypted. On computers equipped with Clipper Chips, data can be read.

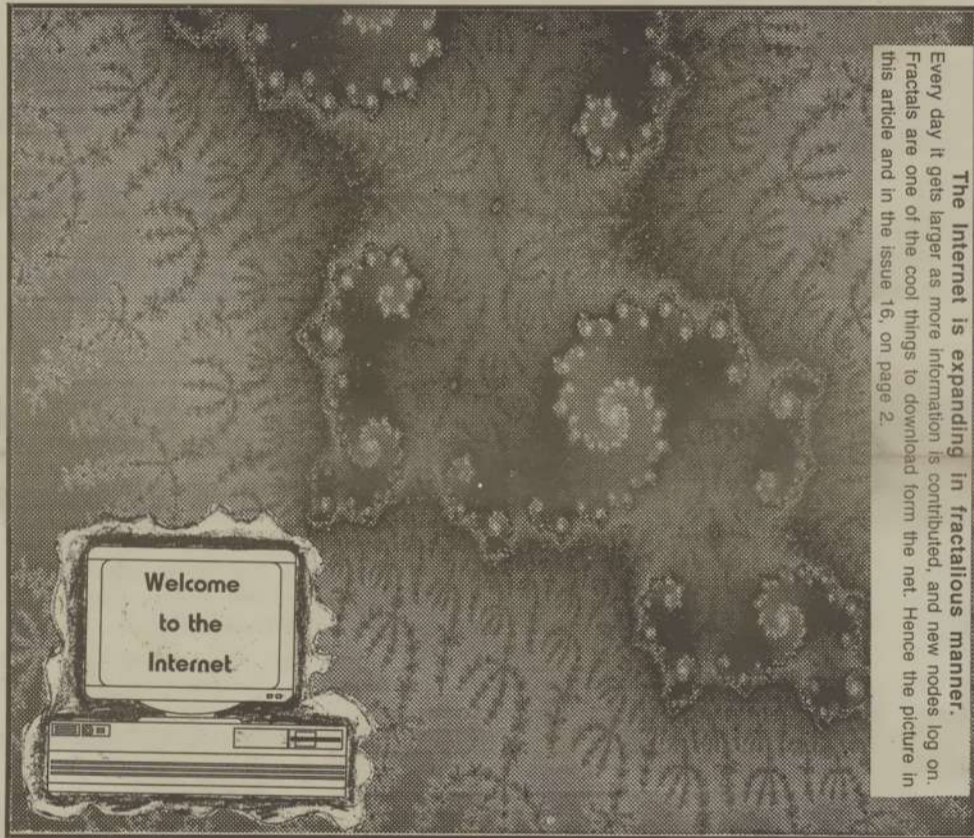
The required Clipper Chip (although, some have voluntarily installed chips) has not passed into law (or so they tell us) because it would set a dangerous precedent. Full implementation of the chip would give a governmental body (associated to the CIA and FBI) the power to access any information it wanted. A benign government would pose little treat to freedom and privacy, but there is always the risk of abuse. With abuse a government can quickly become like Big Brother, from George Orwell's novel, 1984.

A Note From The Author

Issues concerning the Internet and more importantly, discussion of access privileges for Clackamas students on the Internet are of primary interest to me. If you, faculty or student would like to give me your input, feel free to e-mail me. From campus I can be reached at **lund5757**. If you are willing to have you views published, please specifically state so in your message. I cannot guarantee pub-



lication of some, any, or all, of your submissions. I am always looking for new material and for new e-friends.



The Internet is expanding in fractalious manner. Every day it gets larger as more information is contributed, and new nodes log on. Fractals are one of the cool things to download from the net. Hence the picture in this article and in the issue 16, on page 2.

has brought portable personal computing into mainstream culture. Corporations of the communication and entertainment industries have been gobbling up their smaller competitors, and have been merging with each other.

These events, along with media hype, is leading to the general opinion that the Internet is an infantile form of the future Information Superhighway.

The government decided that it is unable to afford the development of the Information Superhighway. Now, it is left to the private enterprises to develop technologies, to make the information dream come true.

Most of the original codes and sights of the early Internet projects have been bought. These systems are primitive in comparison to the grandiose plans for the Information Superhighway. There are still many services that have to be developed, and interfaces to be made user friendly.

The corporate media version of the Information Superhighway

could conduct transactions for goods, services, or information anywhere in the world, without having to exchange currency. The global interaction would boost, and unify, the international economy.

While culturing dreams of a utopic communications future, we must keep sight of the flaws that implementation could entail.

The plans for commercializing the Internet do not appear to include the poor. Even if electron-



ics become cheap, and our country affluent, there will always be poor people. A minority of people in our country, and the majority of people in the Third World, who can not afford the cost of riding on the superhighway. These people are excluded from not only an economic system but also the

dog, the poor, or the long term benefit of humanity?

Eras of history are named after the resource most important to make tools (of both creation and destruction). Thus we have the Stone Age,... Bronze Age,... Steel Age (typically termed as the Industrial Revolution),... Atomic Age, Space Age.

We are now in, or are entering, the Information Age, or the Computer Age. A government that gives away its control of money production, must secure control of the age's key commodity (to prevent corporate takeover): information.

Information has always been important, but secondary to the resources and brute force wielded. Global communications make the benefits of location and possession, secondary to having the proper information, before it is obsolete.

We have conquered our environment (but by no means control it) and can make drastic changes to it. At this stage of technologi-