

Prologue

It was now both the best and worst of times as humanity rushed headlong into a parallel unsustainable rise and as well as the almost certain demise of their future prospects.

For those newly born and the young, it was a time of great hope of continuing technological progress, the digital accessibility of the cumulative knowledge of all humankind, major medical advances, and ambitious human exploration of the oceans and of space. The wealthy revel in their decadence earned from their predatory thievery now having obtained a majority of the total money, engagement in the unaccountable plundering of the planet's resources and the eminent domain capture of the property of the world. Their corporations continued their Manifest Destiny of empire building, global surveillance, and parasitic digital data collection and the exploitation, commercialism and commoditization of human online life. They pass this wealth from generation to generation, each generation believing that they were inherently smarter and more deserving. As if being born on third base carried with it the assurance, they had hit a standup triple. This was the primary source of their unwarranted and naïve optimism. With power and wealth, they create their own reality.

For all others, those matured and life experienced in the dirty ways of the world, it was a time of great dread from unchecked parasitic vulture economics. The relentless driving of previously unknown levels of economic inequality and unsustainable social division. The toll in human costs of the immoral perpetual wars, autonomous robotic aerial executions perpetrating war crimes now approaching one million civilian casualties since 2001, and the extra-judicial confinement, and torture of the innocent. The continuing destruction of their planets environment, the rise of religious fanaticism seeking a near-term end of days. The acting out of those who have abandoned all hope, due to extreme poverty, high inflation and unemployment, leading them to employ terrorism and seek weapons of mass destruction. The engineers and scientists emboldened by their successes and lack of accountability driving everyone toward the danger of an uncontrollable autonomous artificial intelligence future. Governments that leave cyber security exploits unreported and unpatched for badly intentioned offensive purposes at the cost of defensive security. Intentionally and recklessly endangering all by throwing stones from a world full of glass houses. These were the sources of their pessimism and their belief in a certain and undeniable destiny which would soon bring an end to the dominant species on their dying planet. For them, it looked increasingly like the end of civilization for the human race.

There were however, a few signs of hope that these same technologies could be employed on behalf of the have nots and powerless, such as the scientific journalism as practiced by organizations like WikiLeaks which has had positive impacts. This effect requiring all media link to the original source documents so that the reader can judge for themselves if the reporters interpretation is accurate and valid. There is also the positive effects of increased use of end to end encryption in web traffic, data transfers, file and email exchanges. This is reducing attack surfaces and the risk of data interception by malicious actors.

There are also some signs that the corporate media, due to the current political attacks and espionage threat punishments will place survival over profit as politicians seek to blur the line between whistleblower leaks and traditional journalism. This obscuration threatens their very survival, not to mention observance of the Constitutional protections which allow democracies to exist.

But in general, the moral physics that a 250 year old democracy had come to rely on had now failed us making this the worst of times for most, and degenerating each and every day.

The prophecies of Idiocracy¹ swept the analog and digital landscapes. Everyone's digital communications became cesspools of malware attempting to steal or hold for ransom your identity, your personal information and your money.

Citizens didn't have any fear the social media that now unknowingly controlled them. The Internet or Clearnet² was now a dangerous place for those aware to visit. Everything connected to this system was hackable. Hell, the NSA could not even protect their hacking tools from being stolen by crackers.

Billions of simple minded and uninformed humans acted like lemmings all stepping off digital cliffs and into the corporate clouds. There, their personal data is vacuumed like some giant digital spider spinning its web and sucking dry anything that smells like personal data from the transfer pipes containing the digital lives of billions of people on the planet.

Corporations used this data to alter the thinking, habits, purchases, and voting preferences of the masses in the now damaged and failing democracies. Yet these lemmings continued to carry these tracking devices with them and placed additional surveillance devices in their homes, on their homes and in their cars, being misled by some misguided sense of convenience. They did this of course, because their connected devices told them to.

Back in the 1990's no one had worried about all the disparate data being collected by the earlier computers, because they knew there would never be a way to aggregate it all these disparate databases into anything useful to anyone. But then came the unregulated profit incentives which birthed server farms, and Internet clouds, web crawlers, bots, and the algorithms to find, manipulate, and sort the big data of a nation and then the entire world.

They were wrong, very, very, wrong.

Greed was good, and practiced from the top on down. People voted for politicians based on what was in it for them, they disconnected from any remaining personal morals or ethics. It was hooray for me and screw you buddy! I got mine, not you try to get yours. The Haves pulled up all the ladders that they had used to get there. Every business transaction was seen as an opportunity to screw someone over.

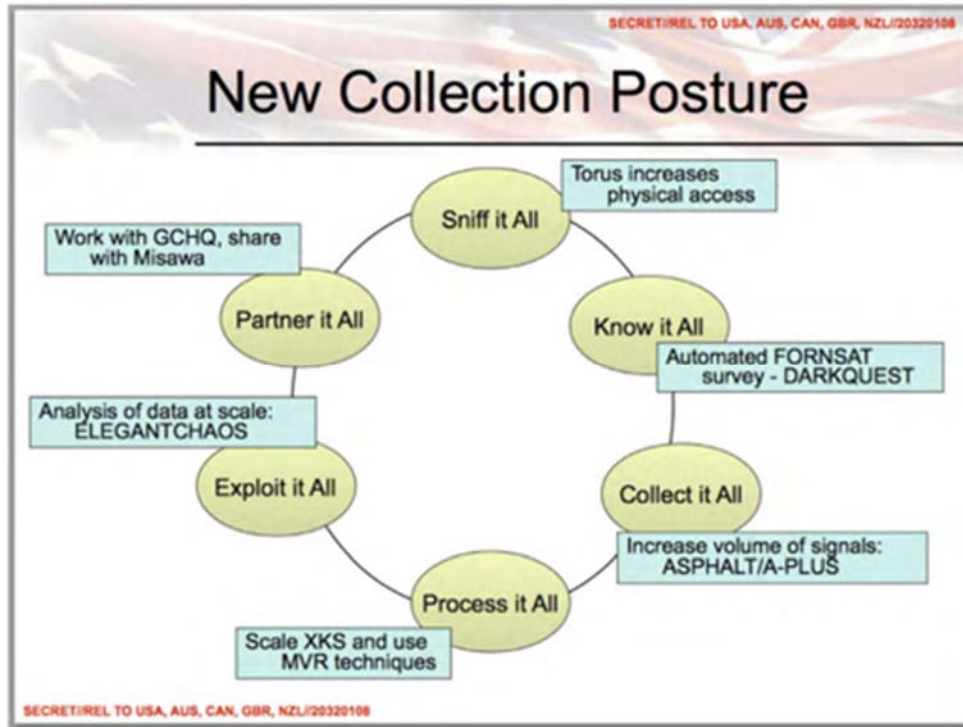
Banks and money ruled as if some great vampire squid had wrapped itself around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smelled like money.³

And of course the American National Security Agency or NSA was hovering up all worldwide digital communications under the guise of Signals Intelligence (SISINT). Using their significant computer power to translate all of these zeros and ones into Human Intelligence (HUMINT) to know everything about everyone. "Collect it all", they said.

¹ This film tells the story of an American soldier who is part in a classified military human hibernation experiment, who accidentally awakens 500 years later in a dystopian society where mankind has embraced anti-intellectualism and commercialism has run rampant, and is devoid of intellectual curiosity, social responsibility, and coherent notions of justice and human rights.

² Clearnet is a term typically referring to the publicly accessible Internet, the opposite of the DarkNet that typically describes the encrypted, anonymous services built on the Tor Internet service, and similar.

³ July 2009 Rolling Stone magazine "The Great American Bubble Machine," by Matt Taibbi



NSA PowerPoint slide courtesy of Edward Snowden

Why would the NSA be interested in you?
Not much of a thinker are you?

The NSA is interested in everything and everyone. They collect and analyze everything. Then they store it, mostly forever. Information is power, power to control, power to convict, power to frame.

- Are you willing to share your salary?
- How about your purchases?
- How about your sexual preferences?
- How about your medical conditions?
- How about your political beliefs?
- How about your religious beliefs?
- How about your friends and all their information?
- How about your travel locations?

The NSA is gathering all this information from everywhere. They can paint a complete picture of your life, right or wrong. What you know, who you see, what you believe, where you go. They can learn how you learn, how you think, and who you are.

- If you know someone is watching do you behave differently, talk differently?
- Did you as a kid, if your mom or dad were watching?
- Is this really what you want, for you, your children, and your grandchildren?
- Do you want to be led by leaders, or ruled by dictators?
- A democracy to be replaced by and totalitarian oligarchy?

The Insider Goes Deep

It was a time of post-factual politics where politician's spent their time trolling the media and the public with demonstrably false conspiracy theories, creating division, fear and confusion. When challenged they backed down with nihilistic denials, alternate facts, and attempting to delegitimize the media with claims of fake news. When directly confronted, they build strawmen, and used Whataboutism⁴ to change the subject to something else.

This is now the job description of our politicians rather than serving the people who elected them by actually doing things that help people like creating jobs, finding markets for it products, providing healthcare, and adequate education.

They continue to explore the depths of division, derision, and tribalism, to see just how low they could go. They plumb the depths of our worst angels. They test the strength of the nation's founding principles, checks and balances, and now had a society bulging at its seams.

After forty years of disinvesting in public education, the population of the semiliterate uninformed where now electronically misinformed and thus disinclined to believe in facts and science and instead clung to unsubstantiated beliefs and unproven and fact-less theories and opinions. These failures to fully fund public education systems had led to a nation of lazy minds unable to keep up with the complexities and pace of modern society. The withdrew from trying to understand the modern world, because it was simpler and easier to live in a smaller less complicated world of their own. These people with a narrow view of convenience over common sense will follow their cars GPS faithfully and drive into a lake and place surveillance devices not only in their pockets but in their homes as well.



Image courtesy of theintercept.com

The Internet was purposely designed with intelligence at the end points, specifically with no centralized control. But now these amoral and unbridled capitalist digital gangster corporations like Facebook, Google, Apple and Microsoft have inserted themselves as Internet gateways into every transaction and communication. More than 70% of all Internet traffic goes through sites owned or operated by Google or Facebook. Not unlike the Truman show, they are using tools and code to record everyone's digital lives, monitoring, guiding and predicting their behavior and violating the American Constitutional guarantees of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. And they make their enormous profits from doing this.

Does **Liberty**⁵ include the freedom from being enslaved by machines that surround us?

4 Whataboutism, is a logical fallacy that attempts to discredit an opponent's position by charging them with hypocrisy without directly refuting or disproving their argument. A classic Soviet/Russian disinformation technique.

5 "Computers make excellent and efficient servants, but I have no wish to serve under them." --Mr. Spock from Season 2, Episode 24 of the original Star Trek TV series.

The Insider Goes Deep

Meanwhile, back at the NSA...

