

# Web (& Print) Log (2005 C.E.)

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created Saturday, 2005 January 1  
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# Chapter 1

## 2005 January

### 1.1 Sunday, January 2

#### 1.1.1 Primality

It seems like every time I go in a chat room, someone tells me that Primality can be decided in polynomial time.<sup>1</sup>

I'm sorry, but primality is NP-complete. I will do these things:

1. formally prove that primality is NP-complete,
2. provide an “engineering proof” that primality is NP-complete, &
3. explain why some people make the mistake of saying it's not NP-complete.

#### References

Most of what I say comes from [9]. When I provide page numbers, it's from this book. When I talk about a catalogue of NP-complete problems, it's the one in this book. When I refer to an NP-complete problem by name, it's the name in the catalogue in this book.

#### Formal Proof

The simplest way to prove that a problem is NP-complete is to demonstrate that it can be transformed into a known NP-complete problem in polynomial time, then demonstrate that a known NP-complete problem (not necessarily the same one) can be transformed into the new problem in polynomial time. (page 38)

The NP-complete catalogue lists Composite Number. (page 288) It basically comes down to “Is the number N composite?”

---

<sup>1</sup>When someone isn't telling me that Primality is in P, someone else is telling me that the RFC documents don't carry any authority because “no one controls the Internet”.

1. Prime can be implemented with Composite Number as NOT (Composite Number). NOT has a polynomial cost ( $O(k)$ ).
2. Composite Number can be implemented as NOT (Prime). Again, NOT has polynomial cost.
3. So Prime is NP-complete.

Looks so simple that it couldn't be true, doesn't it? And since I don't have a PhD in anything, it's also obvious that what I say is bullshit. Too bad for those who disbelieve (unless it motivates them to do research & either conclude I am right or demonstrate that I'm wrong).

### Engineering Proof

Let's define our Prime problem so we can talk about it with numbers.

Prime:

Given: a positive integer  $N$ .

Question: Is  $N$  prime? In other words, is it true that there are no positive integers,  $I$  &  $J$  ( $1 < I < N$ ,  $1 < J < N$ ) such that  $I * J = N$ ?

Also, remember that when we measure the size of inputs in complexity theory, we may assume that the inputs are "reasonably encoded" (page 5). For integers, this means that the number *cannot* be encoded in unary. So the size of an integral input is  $\log(N)$ .<sup>2</sup>

I guess this won't be a proof that Prime is NP-complete so much as it's a proof that this algorithm:

```
(defun prime? (n)
  (do ((i 2 (1+ i))
      (is-composite nil (zerop (mod n i))))
      ((or (>= i (sqrt n)) is-composite)
       (if is-composite 'composite 'prime))))
```

is not a polynomial time algorithm for Prime.

I assume we can all agree that the cost of this "prime?" algorithm is  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ .

Table 1.1 shows of  $N$ , work ( $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ ), input size ( $\text{Log}(N)$ ), & some simple polynomials of input size.

I apologize for the size of the table. Also, I wanted to use bigger numbers, but I don't have a language with me that supports bignums, so we're limited to the size of a real on an Intel Pentium something-or-other (probably 64 bits, IEEE format).

---

<sup>2</sup>If you disagree with this, then you disagree with the book I'm using, & with the largest portion of the body of work about complexity theory. Hey, you might be right, but you're definitely working with definitions outside of the current canon, so we probably shouldn't even bother to discuss it, unless you want to start by convincing everyone else to use your definitions.

N	Sqrt(N)	Ln(N)	$(LnN)^2$	$(LnN)^4$	$(LnN)^8$
$1.00 \times 10^{00}$	$1.00 \times 10^{00}$	$0.00 \times 10^{00}$	$0.00 \times 10^{00}$	$0.00 \times 10^{00}$	$0.00 \times 10^{00}$
$1.00 \times 10^{03}$	$3.16 \times 10^{01}$	$6.91 \times 10^{00}$	$4.77 \times 10^{01}$	$2.28 \times 10^{03}$	$5.18 \times 10^{06}$
$1.00 \times 10^{06}$	$1.00 \times 10^{03}$	$1.38 \times 10^{01}$	$1.91 \times 10^{02}$	$3.64 \times 10^{04}$	$1.33 \times 10^{09}$
$1.00 \times 10^{09}$	$3.16 \times 10^{04}$	$2.07 \times 10^{01}$	$4.29 \times 10^{02}$	$1.84 \times 10^{05}$	$3.40 \times 10^{10}$
$1.00 \times 10^{12}$	$1.00 \times 10^{06}$	$2.76 \times 10^{01}$	$7.63 \times 10^{02}$	$5.83 \times 10^{05}$	$3.40 \times 10^{11}$
$1.00 \times 10^{15}$	$3.16 \times 10^{07}$	$3.45 \times 10^{01}$	$1.19 \times 10^{03}$	$1.42 \times 10^{06}$	$2.03 \times 10^{12}$
$1.00 \times 10^{18}$	$1.00 \times 10^{09}$	$4.14 \times 10^{01}$	$1.72 \times 10^{03}$	$2.95 \times 10^{06}$	$8.71 \times 10^{12}$
$1.00 \times 10^{21}$	$3.16 \times 10^{10}$	$4.84 \times 10^{01}$	$2.34 \times 10^{03}$	$5.47 \times 10^{06}$	$2.99 \times 10^{13}$
$1.00 \times 10^{24}$	$1.00 \times 10^{12}$	$5.53 \times 10^{01}$	$3.05 \times 10^{03}$	$9.33 \times 10^{06}$	$8.70 \times 10^{13}$
$1.00 \times 10^{27}$	$3.16 \times 10^{13}$	$6.22 \times 10^{01}$	$3.87 \times 10^{03}$	$1.49 \times 10^{07}$	$2.23 \times 10^{14}$
$1.00 \times 10^{30}$	$1.00 \times 10^{15}$	$6.91 \times 10^{01}$	$4.77 \times 10^{03}$	$2.28 \times 10^{07}$	$5.18 \times 10^{14}$
$1.00 \times 10^{33}$	$3.16 \times 10^{16}$	$7.60 \times 10^{01}$	$5.77 \times 10^{03}$	$3.33 \times 10^{07}$	$1.11 \times 10^{15}$
$1.00 \times 10^{36}$	$1.00 \times 10^{18}$	$8.29 \times 10^{01}$	$6.87 \times 10^{03}$	$4.72 \times 10^{07}$	$2.23 \times 10^{15}$
$1.00 \times 10^{39}$	$3.16 \times 10^{19}$	$8.98 \times 10^{01}$	$8.06 \times 10^{03}$	$6.50 \times 10^{07}$	$4.23 \times 10^{15}$
$1.00 \times 10^{42}$	$1.00 \times 10^{21}$	$9.67 \times 10^{01}$	$9.35 \times 10^{03}$	$8.75 \times 10^{07}$	$7.65 \times 10^{15}$
$1.00 \times 10^{45}$	$3.16 \times 10^{22}$	$1.04 \times 10^{02}$	$1.07 \times 10^{04}$	$1.15 \times 10^{08}$	$1.33 \times 10^{16}$
$1.00 \times 10^{48}$	$1.00 \times 10^{24}$	$1.11 \times 10^{02}$	$1.22 \times 10^{04}$	$1.49 \times 10^{08}$	$2.23 \times 10^{16}$
$1.00 \times 10^{51}$	$3.16 \times 10^{25}$	$1.17 \times 10^{02}$	$1.38 \times 10^{04}$	$1.90 \times 10^{08}$	$3.62 \times 10^{16}$
$1.00 \times 10^{54}$	$1.00 \times 10^{27}$	$1.24 \times 10^{02}$	$1.55 \times 10^{04}$	$2.39 \times 10^{08}$	$5.71 \times 10^{16}$
$1.00 \times 10^{57}$	$3.16 \times 10^{28}$	$1.31 \times 10^{02}$	$1.72 \times 10^{04}$	$2.97 \times 10^{08}$	$8.80 \times 10^{16}$
$1.00 \times 10^{60}$	$1.00 \times 10^{30}$	$1.38 \times 10^{02}$	$1.91 \times 10^{04}$	$3.64 \times 10^{08}$	$1.33 \times 10^{17}$
$1.00 \times 10^{63}$	$3.16 \times 10^{31}$	$1.45 \times 10^{02}$	$2.10 \times 10^{04}$	$4.43 \times 10^{08}$	$1.96 \times 10^{17}$

Table 1.1: N, work (Sqrt(N)), input size (Log (N)), & some simple polynomials of input size

The first column,  $N$ , is the input to our “prime?” algorithm.

The second column,  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ , is the work done by our “prime?” algorithm. It’s the worst-case number of divisions.

The third column,  $\text{Ln}(N)$ , is the size of the input. Determination of polynomial order are made with respect to this column. I repeat: When determining whether an algorithm is NP-complete, its cost is compared to this column, the size of the input.

If you scan the  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  column & the  $\text{Ln}(N)$  column, you can see that  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  increases more quickly than  $\text{Ln}(N)$ . In fact,  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  accelerates as  $N$  gets larger. From the first row to the second, the order of magnitude of  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  moves from 0 to 1, an increase of 1. From the second to third row, 2. Then the steps basically alternate 1, 2, 1, 2, & so on. I’d say the mean step is 1.5, but this is the order of magnitude of  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ . So  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  increases faster & faster.

Now look at  $\text{Ln}(N)$ . See how it maintains the same order of magnitude for more than 10 rows. It’s increasing so slowly that the order of magnitude doesn’t help us understand how slowly. So let’s look at the mantissa. It adds 1 to the mantissa about every other row initially. Towards the end of the table, it keeps the same high-order digit on the mantissa for eight rows. Meanwhile,  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  increases its order of magnitude by 1.3 with each row.

An algorithm is NP-complete if there is no polynomial function  $F$  such that  $F(\text{Ln}(N))$  is greater than the cost ( $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  in this case) for sufficiently large  $N$ . So the last three columns are some polynomial functions of  $\text{Ln}(N)$ . One of them is pretty large,  $(\text{Ln}N)^8$ .

I wanted to use some really large polynomials, such as  $(\text{Ln}N)^{100}$ , but I didn’t have bignums available. So we’ll have to make do with  $(\text{Ln}N)^8$  in the right-most column.

Look at the column for  $(\text{Ln}N)^8$ . Notice that it starts larger than  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  until about  $N = 1.00\text{E}+30$ , which is a pretty damned big number, but NP-completeness is always about pretty damned big numbers, & a 30-digit number is still smaller than the largest primes known (which have thousands of digits). After  $N = 1.00\text{E}+30$ ,  $(\text{Ln}N)^8$  is always less than  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ .

If you imagine other polynomials of  $\text{Ln}(N)$ , such as  $(\text{Ln}N)^{12}$ ,  $(\text{Ln}N)^{16}$ , ... all the way up to whatever you want (such as  $(\text{Ln}N)^{100}$ ), you can see that it’ll always start larger than  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ , but eventually, it’ll cross  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ , & after that, it’ll always be smaller than  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ . In other words, there is no polynomial function  $F$  such that  $F(\text{Ln}N) < \text{Sqrt}(N)$  for sufficiently large  $N$ . So our “prime?” algorithm is not a polynomial algorithm.

### Why Some People Think Primality is Polynomial

Their error is that they compared the cost of the algorithm ( $\text{Sqrt}(N)$ ) to  $N$ , not to the *size* of the input, which is  $\text{Ln}(N)$ .  $\text{Sqrt}(N)$  is always less than  $N$  ( $1 < N$ ). By that measure, the algorithm is polynomial, but when determining NP-completeness, we must measure the *size* of the input.

When we have an algorithm which has a polynomial cost with respect to  $N$ , it’s called a *pseudo-polynomial time algorithm* (page 91). Also on that same

page of the NP-completeness book I have, it hints that dynamic programming techniques often produce pseudo-polynomial time algorithms for NP-complete problems.

Do you remember how I said in an earlier e-mail that primality is special in that, if you don't demand that cost be compared to  $\ln N$ , primality has a polynomial solution? I'm saying it now: I told you so. But I'm forgetting that since I don't have a PhD, what I say doesn't matter.

Thanks for reading. I have no idea why this stuck in my craw today.

## 1.2 Monday, January 3

1. "Unbreakable Java: A Java Server That Never Goes Down". By Thomas Smits. [200]

## 1.3 Tuesday, January 4

### 1.3.1 History of the Middle East

Do you have any idea how difficult it is to find a multi-century factual history of the Middle East, or of the countries or societies which are now in the Middle East? Man, it's tough. Most sources I've found online want to comment on the events of the past 25 years or so, but I don't know enough about the big picture to make much of what they say. So I want just a simple list of what happened & who was involved. I mean, even just a timeline would be great. I might have to resort to ... the local library this weekend.

In case anyone is interested in why I am interested in the history of the Middle East: I'm reading *Historical Dynamics: Why States Rise and Fall* [269], & the author pointed out that, after an empire falls, there is almost always a period of 200 to 300 years of instability before another empire takes its place. He supported the claim with evidence & implied that it's a well-accepted heuristic among historians. Nomadic empires have a shorter time of instability, about 100 years, & extremely well-entrenched empires have a longer period (about 400 years).

That got me wondering how that heuristic applies to the Middle East (or to the countries or cultures which are now in the Middle East). If the heuristic applies to those cultures/countries/regions, then the instability there is part of the 300-year period of instability. But when did the instability start? I'm sure it started at or before the end of WW2, so it's at least 60 years old. I wonder if it started before, maybe with the creation of Zionism at the Zionist Congress in Switzerland in 1897, but Zionism is the kind of thing that could have started in reaction to some other oppressive instability.

Now, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking what I'm thinking at this point: "It all goes back to some myth from the Bible", but it couldn't. There's no way that political chaos could be continuous for more than 2,000 years. No way. There had to be some empire involved during that time. Even

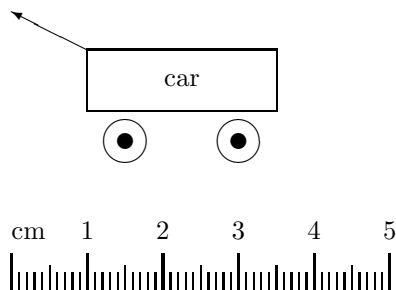


Figure 1.1: Example `picture`, showing a diagram from page 197 of [119]

I can name one: The Ottoman Empire (Turks). And the Taj Mahal is about 300 years old. You don't build the Eighth Wonder of the World during a period of political & social chaos. So about 300 years ago, there must have been some kind of empire there.

So that's the kind of thing I'm looking for, a list of governments, their territories, who beat them up, & took over next. Stuff like that. And that's why I'm interested: Because if the current instability started 60 or 100 years ago, then it won't be ending with elections in Iraq this month, but if it started, say, 300 years ago, then elections this month just might be the start of the end of the turmoil.

(But the turmoil has been around for my entire lifetime, so I don't imagine it will end any time soon.)

### 1.3.2 $\LaTeX$ Pictures

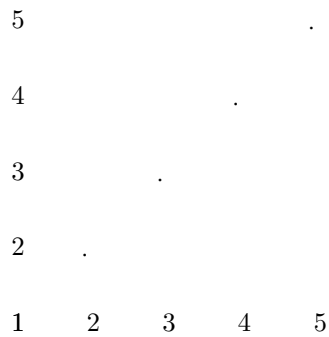
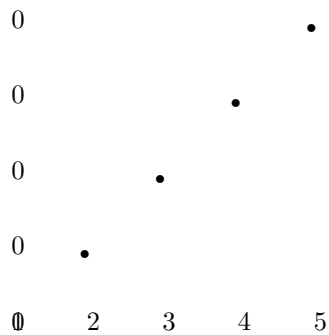
I've never used  $\LaTeX$ 's `picture` environment much, & I'm curious to see how well it works when compiling to HTML, which is how I do most things on my web site. So here are some experiments with  $\LaTeX$ 's `picture` environment.

On paper, Figure 1.1 should be 5 centimeters by 3.9 centimeters & containing a simple wagon, like a kid might play with, & a horizontal bar with metric marks on it. It is a copy of an example `picture` environment on page 197 of [119].

Figure 1.2 is  $y = x$ . The point of it is a straightforward application of the `multitup` command.

## 1.4 Wednesday, January 5

1. "U.S. Marine in Mysterious Case Declared Deserter". By Will Dunham. [66]
2. "Marine who surfaced in Lebanon after purported kidnapping missing again". At SFGate.com. [228]

Figure 1.2:  $y = x$ Figure 1.3:  $y = x$ 

3. “Attorney General Pick Vows to Honor Torture Pacts”. By Deborah Charles. [48]
4. “US general warns Army Reserve is being broken”. By Will Dunham. [65]
5. “Atheist who challenged pledge words ”under God” sues again – this time with other parents”. By David Kravets. [112]
6. “Public split on privatizing Soc. Sec.”. [234]

### 1.4.1 More $\LaTeX$ Pictures

Figure 1.3 is like Figure 1.2 except that the dots are 1 millimeter in diameter on paper instead of 0.5 millimeters in diameter.

Here is the  $\LaTeX$  code which produced the picture in Figure 1.3.

```

\newcounter{pic-002-x}
\newcounter{pic-002-y}
\setlength{\unitlength}{1mm}
\begin{picture}(50,50)
\multiput(0,0)(10,0){5}{
  \addtocounter{pic-002-x}{1}
  \makebox(0,0)[b]{\arabic{pic-002-x}}}
\multiput(0,0)(0,10){5}{
  \addtocounter{pic-001-y}{1}
  \makebox(0,0)[b]{\arabic{pic-002-y}}}
\put(10,10){ \circle*{1} }
\put(20,20){ \circle*{1} }
\put(30,30){ \circle*{1} }
\put(40,40){ \circle*{1} }
\end{picture}

```

Figure 1.4 shows  $y = \frac{x^2}{2}$  with lots of disconnected dots. It was generated by this Lisp program:

```

(defun fig-pic-002 ()
  (format t "~&\setlength{\unitlength}{1mm}")
  (format t "~&\begin{picture}(50,50)")
  (loop for i from 1 to 5 do
    (format t "~&\put(~D,0){~D}" (* 10 i) i)
    (format t "~&\put(0,~D){~D}" (* 10 i) i))
  (do ((i 0.0 (+ i 0.1)))
    ((>= i 5.0))
    (format t "~&\put(~,2F,~,2F){ \circle*{1} }"
      (* 10 i) (* 10 (/ (* i i) 5))))
  (format t "~&\end{picture}"))

```

After graphing just this one function, I can see that a useful library for doing these things would probably need to allow me to give it a list of points to plot & the dimensions of the image on paper. It would produce a list of `\put` commands for L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X's `picture` environment. It would not be trivial to write, though it would not be difficult. Most of the work would occur from the need to make it complete.

## 1.5 Thursday, January 6

1. “For The Love Of Money”. By David C. Korten. [111]

## 1.6 Friday, January 7

1. “Dead voted in governor’s race King County investigating ghost voter cases”. By Phuong Cat Le Michelle Nicolosi. [13]

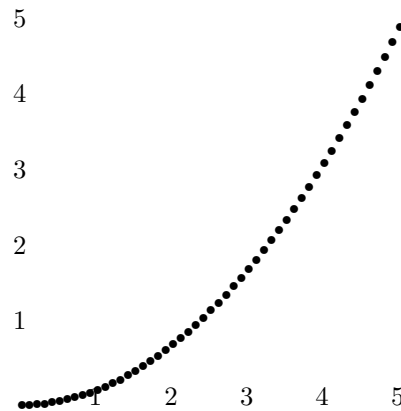


Figure 1.4:  $y = \frac{x^2}{2}$ , generated by a Lisp program

2. “Genetic HIV Resistance Deciphered”. By Randy Dotinga. [64]
3. “Hanging Rock, Australia” at lonelyplanet.com.

## 1.7 Saturday, January 8

1. “Civil rights slayings divide Miss. town”. By Shelia Byrd. [44]

### 1.7.1 Social Security System

I’m talking about the United States’s Social Security System. Predictions are that some kind of “the social security system is broken” argument will be an annoyingly prominent rabble rouser of a feature of the next presidential elections.

#### Summary

Here’s what I learned. You can read my notes after this section, but they are rambling & unedited.

- The Social Security System has an excellent web site<sup>3</sup>.
- Table 4.A3<sup>4</sup> of the Annual Statistical Supplement, 2004<sup>5</sup> shows all sorts of interesting data in terms of megadollars. I highly recommend examining it & figuring your own statistics from it.

---

<sup>3</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2004/4a.html#table4.a3>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2004/index.html>

- “Frequently Asked Questions About Social Security’s Future<sup>6</sup>” has lots of useful short answers.
- “Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon<sup>7</sup>” [35] appears to be *the* report which caused the recent hubub. It explains the problem & proposes a few solutions. It also says that other countries are facing their own version of this very same problem (an aging population).
- There are two parts to the problem.
  1. In 2018, the benefits payed by the social security system will exceed the taxes which fund the system. At that time, the social security system will be able to pay benefits in full by taking money from two trust funds it holds.
  2. In 2042, the trust funds will be exhausted. At that time, the social security system will be able to pay in benefits only as much as it collects in taxes. So it won’t be able to pay all the benefits.
- The problem is legitimately difficult to solve, but politicians have done nothing while shouting (since 1997 or before, according to my memory) that we face an immediate disaster. They’ve done nothing because all solutions immagined so far require sacrifices from someone, so they are afraid to bite the bullet, do the right thing, & lose some votes.
- Solutions which are mentioned on the Social Security web site include:
  - Allowing or requiring workers to put their social security savings into individual investment accounts. Continue to pay the benefits of existing retirees from the trust funds, so those people do not lose their benefits. (President George W. Bush demands this solution.)
  - Invest the trust funds in the stock market.
  - Raise social security taxes by 1.69 percent if done immediately or by a higher rate later. This would preserve the system for 75 years.
  - Reduce benefits a small amount of done immediately. This would preserve the system for 75 years.
- Solutions which occurred to me while doing this research (so they would surely have occurred to professional social security analysts) but which are not mentioned on the web site include:
  - Allow more immigrants to counteract the lower birth rate & to maintain the size of the work force.

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/qa.htm>

<sup>7</sup><http://www.ssab.gov/NEW/Publications/Financing/actionsshouldbetaken.pdf>

year	receipts	expenditures	ratio
1940	368	62	5.935
1950	2,928	1,022	2.864
1960	11,382	11,198	1.016
1970	32,220	29,848	1.079
1980	105,841	107,678	0.982
1990	286,653	227,519	1.259
2000	490,513	358,339	1.368

Table 1.2: Social Security receipts & expenditures (in megadollars), & their ratios

### Notes During Research

1. United States's Social Security Online Social Security Online<sup>8</sup>
2. On the "Resources<sup>9</sup>" page of the Social Security Online web site, there is a "Policy, Research, & Statistics<sup>10</sup>" link. It goes to a page with links to lots of different reports & statistics.
3. "Annual Statistical Supplement, 2004<sup>11</sup>"
4. I sometimes hear that Americans work way more hours than we did in past decades, but Table 3.B3<sup>12</sup> does not support that claim. The mean work week in the 1930s was less than 40 hours. It reached a high of 42 hours in 1994, but for most years, it was only slightly over 40 hours. So yes, people work longer hours now than they did, but not by the life-shattering amounts that I sometimes hear. I think the table is for manual laborers; maybe the mean work weeks of white-collar workers are more severe.

Table 4.A1<sup>13</sup> at the Social Security web site is interesting. It shows the receipts, expenditures, & assets (in millions of U.S. dollars) for many years.

I expect that, if the social security system really is "in trouble", as some politicians say, I should be able to see it for myself in a table that shows the ratio of receipts to expenditures. If there is trouble, then that ratio will fall. I guess the critical point is 1.0; if the ratio falls below that, we have some serious problems. Table 1.2 shows that. The first two columns show megadollars; those numbers come from Social Security's Table 4.A1<sup>14</sup>. My table doesn't show every year. I did about one year per decade.

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<sup>8</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/>

<sup>9</sup>[http://www.ssa.gov/data\\_research.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/data_research.htm)

<sup>10</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/policy/>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2004/index.html>

<sup>12</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2004/3b.html#table3.b3>

<sup>13</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2004/4a.html#table4.a1>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2004/4a.html#table4.a1>

year	receipts	expenditures	ratio
1940	766	62	12.354
1950	13,721	1,022	13.425
1960	20,324	11,198	1.814
1970	32,454	29,848	1.087
1980	22,823	107,678	0.211
1990	214,197	227,519	0.941
2000	930,986	358,339	2.598

Table 1.3: Social Security receipts & expenditures (in megadollars), & their ratios

Well now. That's very interesting. If trends in the ratio between receipts & expenditures is the indicator of problems, then the social security system was better in 2000 than it was in 1980, when it was below the critical point of 1.0. Whether or not this ratio is an accurate determiner, it could be the measure by which some people claim that social security isn't in jeopardy & in fact "is better now than it has been for decades". (At this point, I'm not saying they are right or wrong. I'm trying to discover by what measure they make those claims.)

Maybe the ratio of assets to expenditures is more important than the one between receipts & expenditures. After all, it's assets that would allow the social security system to exist through a period in which most beneficiaries did not have children who were simultaneously working & paying into the system. Table ?? is like Table ?? except that the ratio it shows is assets to expenditures.

The assets:expenditures ratio says exactly what the receipts:expenditures ratio does. By its measure, the social security system is healthier now than it has been in decades.

If I've learned anything so far, it's the measures by which some people claim that there is no problem, but that doesn't prove they are correct. What's more, I don't know the measures which indicate there is a problem, & I don't know the effects of the various proposed solutions.

Here are two question/answer pairs from the "FAQ about Social Security's Future" on the Social Security Online web site:

**Q** I'm 35 years old. If nothing is done to improve Social Security, what can I expect to receive in retirement benefits from the program?

**A** Unless changes are made, at age 73 your scheduled benefits could be reduced by 27 percent and could continue to be reduced every year thereafter from presently scheduled levels.

**Q** I'm 25 years old. If nothing is done to change Social Security, what can I expect to receive in retirement benefits from the program?

**A** Unless changes are made, when you reach age 63 in 2042, benefits for all retirees could be cut by 27 percent and could continue to be reduced every year thereafter. If you lived to be 100 years old in 2079 (which will be more common by then), your scheduled benefits could be reduced by 33 percent from today’s scheduled levels.

Both of those answers contain links to “The 2004 OASDI Trustees Report<sup>15</sup>”.

That Trustees Report is interesting. On the one hand, in its Section 2.A Highlights<sup>16</sup>, its short-range predictions sound like good news, but its long-range predictions are that the trust funds will be exhausted in 2042. Aha. The last paragraph of the long-range results spells it out:

Between about 2010 and 2030, OASDI cost will increase rapidly due to the retirement of the large baby-boom generation. After 2030, increases in life expectancy and relatively low fertility rates will continue to increase Social Security system costs, but more slowly. Annual cost will exceed tax income starting in 2018 at which time the annual gap will be covered with cash from redeeming special obligations of the Treasury, until these assets are exhausted in 2042. Separately, the DI fund is projected to be exhausted in 2029 and the OASI fund in 2044.

They predict low fertility. I wonder if they considered immigration’s tendency in the other direction. (In Section C Assumptions about the Future<sup>17</sup>, I see that it does include immigration.)

Now I understand the problem. In the “Long Range Actuarial Estimates” part of Section D Projections of Future Financial Status<sup>18</sup>, it explains that the ratio of benefits (which must be paid) to income rises to 1.0 in 2018. (In an earlier section, the report said that this will happen because the baby boomer generation will begin retiring in droves at that time.) So 2018 is the critical point after which the Social Security System must exist on assets, not income from taxation. The year 2042 becomes another magic point because, if nothing changes after 2018, the SSS’s assets will be exhausted in that year. After 2042, the SSS will be able to pay benefits equal to what it collects from taxes.

(If you’re interested in doing your own research, you want to read the “The 2004 OASDI Trustees Report<sup>19</sup>”. It’s a good use of my tax dollars.)

That’s all true if nothing changes. I guess possible solutions include:

- raise taxes,
- reduce benefits,
- sell new trust funds,

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<sup>15</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/index.html>

<sup>16</sup>[http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/IL\\_highlights.html#wp76455](http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/IL_highlights.html#wp76455)

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/IL\\_assump.html](http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/IL_assump.html)

<sup>18</sup>[http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/IL\\_project.html](http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/IL_project.html)

<sup>19</sup><http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/TR04/index.html>

- migrate assets to something else,
- maintain the ratio of working tax payers to retired beneficiaries.

Of course, nobody wants either of the first two solutions. I haven't heard talk of new trust funds; I wonder why. Some politicians talk of a system of individual investment accounts as an alternative form of asset, but it seems like that would increase the burden on the Social Security System while simultaneously moving people's savings from the extremely secure two trust funds held by the Social Security System into less secure individual accounts. I haven't heard anyone discuss the last option I mentioned, that of maintaining the ratio of workers to beneficiaries. Even with a low birth rate, this might be accomplished with immigration. (Immigrants are great. When a baby pops out of his mother on the operating table, you can't be sure what he'll become, but with immigrants, you can set whatever standards you want. If you say that any immigrant must have a PhD, then every new member of your population due to immigration will come with a PhD. Far less risky than babies.)

The "Expeirence in Other Countries" section (page 8) of "The Social Security System: Why Action Must Be Taken[?, 2005-jan-08-b]" says that the problem of an aging population is not limited to the United States. So other countries are dealing with their version of a Social Security System problem, too. Interestingly, that report, which was written in 2001, puts the first critical date in 2016, not 2018.

## 1.8 Sunday, January 9

### 1.8.1 eBook

I've heard the term "eBook", & I can guess what it is in general, but I wanted to know specifics.

1. "ebook" at Wikipedia<sup>20</sup>

According to Wikipedia, *eBook* is a concept, not a single protocol, &  $\LaTeX$  is a format which counts as an eBook. So I, as a  $\LaTeX$  user, have been using eBooks since before 1990.

2. "DjVu" at Wikipedia
3. "Plucker" at Wikipedia
4. "Ebooks: Neither E, Nor Books". By Cory Doctorow. [62]

## 1.9 Wednesday, January 12

1. "Officials: Search Is Over for Iraq WMD".
2. "Sham Recount Process on Diebold E-voting Machines"

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<sup>20</sup><http://wikipedia.org/>

## 1.10 Thursday, January 13

1. “The Sky’s the Limit”. By Ari Berman. [30]
2. “Abu Ghraib man ignored orders”. At BBC News. [203]

### 1.10.1 Social Security

Cheney said today that the Social Security System is in crisis.

Some guy on the news (Rojer Loenstine) says that the Bush administration is twisting the numbers slightly so they can push their privatization agenda. The guy says that the optimistic projection has been more accurate than the middle projection.

His article is A Question of Numbers. It’s in this week’s New York Times Magazine.

## 1.11 Saturday, January 15

1. “He’s got the virus-writing bug”. [126]
2. Pictures of sea monsters washed up by the tsunami<sup>21</sup> have been greatly exaggerated. [210]

### 1.11.1 Weapons of Mass Destruction

1. “US quietly halts quest for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction”. [253]
2. “US gives up hunt for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq”. [250]
3. “US ends search for weapons of mass destruction”. [248]
4. “US Ends Search for Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq”. By Al Pessin. [171]
5. “US gives up hunt for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq”. [251]
6. “No fanfares when the search for WMD in Iraq ended last month”. By Dafna Linzer. [131]
7. “There Weren’t Weapons Of Mass Destruction In Iraq?”. By Scott Jones. [102].  
A very good article. Sums up the situation just fine.
8. “Missing Weapons of Mass Destruction: Is Lying about the reason for war an impeachable offense?”. By John W. Dean. [57]

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<sup>21</sup><http://forum.openwater.ru/index.php?showtopic=611>

At last, the government of the United States has acknowledged what almost everyone else in the world already knew. (The only people who didn't already know it were the Americans who elected George W. Bush to his second term as president.)

Instead of admitting that there were never any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq & apologizing for the mistake, the government is blaming their intelligence networks. Their claims aren't surprising. Politicians never admit errors unless they believe doing so will gain votes.

Why isn't the American news industry talking about this more? Why aren't the American people demanding that our government admit its mistake? (Maybe because it wasn't a mistake. It was a lie.)

Being one who rules in the name of the people means never having to admit that you lied.

## 1.12 Sunday, January 16

1. "The Tsunami Victims That We Don't Count". By Derrick Z. Jackson. [276]
2. "Should we count dead Iraqi civilians?". By Joe Boyle. [39]
3. "What can we count on?". By Steve Hartman. [88]  
Mr. Hartman's article is worthless.
4. "Dead Iraqis don't count". By Jo Swift. [262]  
Jo's article is pretty good. Her final paragraph is chilling.
5. Iraq Body Count web site. <http://www.iraqbodycount.net/>  
Today, they estimate the body count in Iraq is at least 15,365 & at most 17,582.
6. "Undocumented death count is left to media". By Laura King. [110]

### 1.12.1 Importance of a body count

A body count is important, true, but it's not justification for discontinuing military aggression in Iraq. That's because, in a *just* war, almost no body count is too much to pay.

When making the case that the United States should not be killing people in Iraq, we must attack the issue at its heart, not with its symptoms. A body count is a symptom. The heart of the issue is that the United States was immoral when it attacked Iraq, & it is immorally occupying Iraq now.

### 1.12.2 Perverted Blogs

Currently, blogs are a decent source of information for what's happening in the world. The American news industry isn't fulfilling its obligations, & blogs might already be a better source of news than the commercial news.

But what happens when governments learn to use blogs? How will we know the truth then?

You can't just say that we can trust a blog according to its reputation. Governments have the resources to create blogs & build their reputations. I wouldn't be sure that such a blog could identify itself as owned by the government. A given site could exist for years with good news & commentary until conditions were right for the government to post carefully constructed lies (also called propaganda).

I would not be surprised if the United States government is already considering the possibilities.

## 1.13 Monday, January 17

1. "Rings of steel combat net attacks". By Mark Ward. [276]
2. 60 Day Coding Competition - Brought to you by Cubehacker.com and Divineo.net!<sup>22</sup>
3. "Is there really a crisis?". By Karen Tumulty Eric Roston. [10]

## 1.14 Tuesday, January 18

1. Polyphonic HMI. <http://www.polyphonichmi.com/>
2. "Together in electric dreams". The Guardian. [244]
3. "Double MyDoom for Internet Explorer flaw". By Robert Lemos. [125]

## 1.15 Thursday, January 20

1. "Bush the Divider". By Pieter Dorsman. [63]
2. "The Bush Administration's Top Ten Lies about War and Terrorism". By Steve Perry. [?]
3. BushLies.net<sup>23</sup>
4. *Scientific Integrity in Policymaking*. By Union of Concerned Scientists. [162]

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<sup>22</sup><http://www.cubehacker.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=229>

<sup>23</sup><http://www.bushlies.net/>

5. “Most Americans worry about economy, Iraq”. At The Times of India. [229]

## 1.16 Friday, January 21

1. “World media: Bush inaugural a jolt”. By Jim Bencivenga. [26]
2. cryptome.org

## 1.17 Sunday, January 23

1. “The Crusade Against Evolution”. By Evan Ratliff. [176]  
Mr. Ratliff’s article is excellent.
2. National Center for Science Education, Oakland, California. <http://www.ncseweb.org>
3. “Theism 101: Is Theism Irrational?”. At About.com. [243]

## 1.18 Wednesday, January 26

1. “World media: Bush inaugural a jolt”. By Jim Bencivenga. [26]
2. cryptome.org
3. “Confessions of a UO Gold Farmer”. <http://www.markeedragon.com/u/ubbthreads/showflat.p>

Neat, short article, but it’s type-set just horribly. It’s almost impossible to read, at least with my bad eye-sight on my clunky old monitor. I removed the draconian, unreadable fonts & colors and put a copy in Appendix A.

4. “Have You Guys Missed Me? Blacksnow Sure Has...”. <http://www.unknownplayer.com/modules>  
a message thread at [unknownplayer.com](http://www.unknownplayer.com).
5. ICQ logs of Destiny are at <http://www.unknownplayer.com/images/blacksnow2/icqlog2003.ht>

It was a nasty conversation. I think I’ll stop reading about this kind of thing now.

## 1.19 Friday, January 28

1. “Source Engine vs Doom 3 Engine”. By Brad Jashinsky. [98]

## Chapter 2

# 2005 February

### 2.1 Tuesday, February 1

1. “Freedom of what?” at CNN.com. [217]

I have to reactions to this article.

My first, mostly surface, reaction is that the study shows exactly what kinds of turd-brains kids are these days. Future dictators will love these people.

My second reaction is to wonder whether the survey foreshadows the future or reveals the classic generation gap.

### 2.2 Thursday, February 3

#### 2.2.1 Slashdork

The things you find when you search the Web for “slashdork” on a whim.

1. “jwz - I hate you, slashdork”. <http://jwz.livejournal.com/145808.html>
2. “Slashdork”. I guess the Web site is “21st Century Digital Boy”. <http://www.neurobashing.com/blog/archi>
3. “2003 January 28” at Pensieri Di Un Lunatico Minore. <http://www.amber.org/petrilli/archive/2003/01>
4. “New macs, Same Conversaton” at NSLog();. [http://nslog.com/archives/2003/01/28/new\\_macs\\_same\\_con](http://nslog.com/archives/2003/01/28/new_macs_same_con)

#### 2.2.2 Final Fantasy online

I started playing it about five days ago.

1. Final Fantasy Shrine. <http://www.ffshrine.org/ffxi/ffxi.php>  
Some cool stuff, but it has a lot of ads. Even though the site isn't selling anything directly, it seems smarmy like a sales site.
2. Final Fantasy Vault. <http://ffvault.ign.com/>.

### **2.3 Friday, February 4**

1. "US promises budget deficit cut, China silent on yuan before G7 talks" at TurkishPress.com. [252]
2. "Update 6: WorldBank Leaders Warn U.S. on Deficits" at Forbes.com. [246]
3. "CNN economics correspondent wrong again on Social Security" at Media Matters for America. [209]

### **2.4 Monday, February 7**

1. "The Fight for Original Games". By Douglass C. Perry. [169]

### **2.5 Monday, February 14**

1. "U.S. report: Iran's weapons of mass destruction" at NewsFromRussia.com. [254]
2. "Weapons of Mass Destruction: North Korea says it possesses nukes". By Tim Johnson. [100]

### **2.6 Sunday, February 20**

1. ALTIMIT look-&-feel on unix. <http://www.altimit-os.net/>

## Chapter 3

### 2005 March

#### 3.1 March 9

1. “Mr Grimes’s Farewell”. <http://www.ddj.com/documents/s=9211/ddj050201dmn/>
2. “Responding to Richard Grimes article on .NET”. <http://weblogs.asp.net/danielfe/archive/2005/02/22/378343>.
3. “Grumpy Grimes”. [http://swigartconsulting.blogs.com/tech\\_blender/2005/02/grumpy\\_grimes.html](http://swigartconsulting.blogs.com/tech_blender/2005/02/grumpy_grimes.html)

#### 3.2 Thursday, March 17

1. “The End of Work or the Renaissance of Slavery?”. By George Caffentzis. [45]
2. “Against Commercialization of Education”. By Chien Shu-Huei. [196]
3. John Aubrey at Wikipedia.  
I was curious about John Aubrey because I heard it mentioned in “The Stones of Blood”, a Doctor Who story.



# Chapter 4

## 2005 April

### 4.1 April 5

#### 4.1.1 One way to implement sessions in a web application

This is from the “nobody asked, & there are plenty of other ways to do it already, but that doesn’t stop me from thinking about it anyway” department.

Let’s say your are implementing a web application that has to keep track of sessions. For example, maybe your users login to your server, use it for some activities, then logout. For the time that a user is logged in, you want your web application to keep a session for the user.

#### Two Previous Techniques

You could implement the session with CGI programs. With that technique, every request from the user starts a new process. The process uses information in the request to identify the session, load the session data, perform the action, send the reply, save the session data, & then exit.

The main problem with the “CGI program per request” technique is that it creates a new process per request, which is inefficient at run-time. A secondary problem is that it’s a pain in the butt to load & save the session data in external storage with each request, though this problem could be removed with a good library.

Another way to implement sessions is with, well, *sessions* inside the web server. This type of session is often implemented with web server plug-ins or just plain built into the web server. PHP is a plug-in for Apache<sup>1</sup>. Active Serf Pages (ASP) is built-into Microsoft’s Ingenuine Information Server (IIS). These systems track sessions for the application program. They might keep session data in external storage, but that is hidden from the application programmer.

Session services that are built into the web server are more efficient at run-time than the “CGI process per request” technique.

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<sup>1</sup>PHP probably works on other web servers. I don’t know.

A problem with session services that are built into the web server is that they might not separate sessions from each other, so if one session trashes the server, the other sessions will suffer, too. Yes, the session services might provide virtual machines to separate sessions as processes would, but talk about re-inventing the wheel! An operating system is a pre-existing, non-trivial chunk of code that has been observed & tested by millions of users, & it provides great separation of tasks in the form of processes.

Another problem with these built-in session services is that they might not be efficient at development time because they pretty much require the application programmer to learn a new environment & maybe even a new language.

(I'll admit that even with these disadvantages, session services built into a web server are pretty damned cool.)

Here's a third approach. I have not seen or heard mention of it before.

### **My Idea**

You could keep a process per session. How does the web browser communicate with the session's process, since the session-independent web server is already on port 80? The session process can be on a dynamically selected port, & the web server could modify the session URL to include the session process's port.

The session can be identified with a cookie in the web browser. If the session's user edits the URL & removes or alters the port, the general purpose web server or the other session processes can redirect the web browser to the proper session process.

Advantages include:

- More efficient than "CGI process per request" because we have a process per session.
- Separates sessions with processes, which is more thorough than the separation provided by session services built into a web server.
- Does not hide the architecture from the application programmer the way session services built into a web server do.
- Simple in concept, like "CGI process per request".

This idea could be more scalable by placing sessions on different servers. For that, you'll need to alter the host name as well as the port for the session process.

### **Problems with the idea**

A friend pointed out that, if the users & the server are on opposite sides of a firewall, this technique has to open up a lot of ports in the firewall.

Maybe if the web server redirected requests to a server that was dedicated to that kind of session. You'd have one process for all the sessions, which is efficient, & you wouldn't need to open up all the ports on the firewall.

I have no idea why I dislike the session services built into web servers. Call me irrational. And since I'm not paid to program web applications in any way, my ideas are harmless.

## 4.2 Monday, April 11

1. Fight for evolution, at ft.com.
2. Scientists to boycott evolution hearings, by Josh Funk in a Kansas City newspaper.
3. Scientists shun Kansas evolution hearing, at newkerala.com
4. Reviving age-old debate: Evolution vs. creationism, by Evan Brandt
5. Is Intelligent Design Testable?, by William A. Dembski.

This article is a disappointment because it does not actually discuss whether the idea of “intelligent design” is testable. It first takes some angry jabs at a woman who lectures about the problems with the idea, & then it retreats into a wordy discussion of what testability is & whether or not Darwinian Evolution is testable. I would have been more interested in an article that listed the parts of the “intelligent design” idea which are testable or have been tested.

6. Can Intelligent Design (ID) be a Testable, Scientific Theory?

This is a cool article. It's not angry & doesn't make angry insults at Darwinian Evolution. It proposes a way to test the idea of “intelligent design”. It mentions some problems with how “intelligent design” is usually described. It points out that until the idea of “intelligent design” can overcome some of its problems, it cannot be science. (And this is from an author who appears to be religious & to approve of the idea of “intelligent design”.)

7. QA: Where is the DC FloodFill method?, by Joao Paulo Figueira, at Pocket PC Developer Network

## 4.3 Sunday, 2005 April 17

1. “Dataless Objects Considered Harmful”, by Chenglie Hu. [94]

This article, which is short & sweet, refers to [104], which I now feel compelled to read.

2. “A Conversation with Alan Kay”, by Stuart Feldman. [69]

It was an interesting interview. Alan Kay likes Lisp as well as Smalltalk. He says that the currently popular language systems offer about half of what Smalltalk or Lisp do, though Smalltalk & Lisp are both out-dated. C could be UNCOL.

```
// Only replace below threshold
if (record.age < threshold) {
    record.release ();
}
```

Figure 4.1: A chunk of code displayed for a C++ programmer

```
;;; Only replace below threshold
(if (< (record 'age) threshold)
    (record 'release))
```

Figure 4.2: A chunk of code displayed for a Lisp programmer

3. “Languages, levels, libraries, and longevity”, by John R. Mashey. [144]
4. “Fuzzy boundaries: objects, components, and web services”, by Roger Sessions. [190]

I suspect that Mr. Sessions has a Winders-centric view of the world because he says that inter-object communication in which the two objects are in different environments<sup>2</sup> uses web service techniques. There are many forms of inter-host RPC which are not web services but with which the communicating end-points may be different operating systems. ONC RPC is one such system.

The article also implied that any two objects in two different processes on the same computer must communicate with Microsoft Common Object Model (COM). Again, not so.

Nevertheless, it was an enjoyable read.

5. “Extensible programming for the 21st century”, by Gregory V. Wilson. [281]

This article describes a nice idea, but I think Mr. Wilson’s view of the programming world is from an imperative point of view only. He suggests that source code could be stored in XML but edited in whatever syntax the programmer prefers. Fair enough. He points out that a chunk of code which might be displayed to a C++ programmer as in Figure 4.1 could be displayed to a Lisp programmer as in Figure 4.2.

Fair enough, but what about a chunk of code which displays in Lisp as in Figure 4.3? How is it displayed in C++? In Java? In C? In Visual Basic?

If we consider only the currently popular imperative languages only, Mr. Wilson might be right that the important differences are in syntax only, but

---

<sup>2</sup>I couldn’t tell if “different environments” in the article implied different host computers or different host computers running different operating systems.

```
(defun make-adder (konstant) )
  #'(lambda (x) (+ x konstant)))
```

Figure 4.3: A chunk of Lisp whose translation to imperative language is not obvious

among the wide world of languages which have not been modified to live in the Dot-Nyet world, there can be huge differences in semantics.

6. “How not to write Fortran in any language”, by Donn Seeley. [188]
7. “Self-healing in modern operating systems”, by Michael W. Shapiro. [191]
8. “Viewpoints: Capitalism or socialism?”, by Ted Wright. [283]
9. Final Fantasy XI is under a distributed denial of service (DDOS) attack. Sony’s announcement on the Play Online web site is a new item. I suspect we can’t rely on it to stay at the same URL for very long. So here is most of it, quoted:

From:PlayOnline  
Apr. 15, 2005 09:15 PDT

**Technical Difficulties Due to Third-Party Attacks**

This is an announcement about PlayOnline network technical difficulties since Apr. 9, 2005.

It has come to our attention that recent technical difficulties with our PlayOnline server are due to a DDoS from anonymous third parties. We have determined that this activity was undertaken with malicious intent and specifically targeted our network. Our technicians are taking every measure possible to prevent further attacks. However, attack methods have varied, which has caused a more time-consuming review of our network protection.

Currently we are unable to determine the precise source of attack. However, with the cooperation of ISP companies, our investigation continues to make progress. Law enforcement authorities in Japan, the United States, and Europe have been contacted for support.

We chose not to make an announcement of this nature earlier due to the unwanted effect it could have on our investigation, on the investigations of authorities abroad, and for stopping information that could be used to undertake additional network attacks. The most recent server difficulties and PlayOnline service interruption, however, have persuaded us to disclose more information on this matter to our users.

We deeply apologize for the inconvenience these attacks have caused in recent days. Attacks continue at this hour in intervals

and we regret that our investigation cannot allow for estimates as to when we expect service to return to optimal levels. Our technicians will continue to select the most effective measures available as we work with local and international authorities to take legal action against those obstructing PlayOnline service. We ask for your understanding and cooperation as we strive to maintain the best service possible. Thank you.

I wonder if the culprit is an angry player? An angry kid player?

10. "Demographics: Online Gamers" at MoGaLiMe. [202]
11. "Game Girls: Online computer gamers aren't who you think they are". [52]
12. "President Bush was not right all along", by Sanjai Tripathi. [267]
13. "Making Connections: Why is the news so bad? What can progressives do to fix it?", by JessicaClark and Tracy Van Slyke. [14]
14. "Analysis: G.O.P. filibuster plan poses risks", by Tom Raum. [177]

## 4.4 Monday, April 25

A friend sent me this:

The State Highway Patrol in conjunction with the FBI has issued a warning advising all dog owners to keep their dogs indoors until further notice. Dogs are being picked off one at a time on an almost continual basis throughout the city. They are falling in great numbers. Police in the city advise all dog owners not to walk their dogs - KEEP THEM INDOORS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

with this picture:

<http://cybertiggyr.com/gene/tae2005/image001.jpg>

## 4.5 Friday, April 29

1. "Doom 4: End of the Game Industry". By John C. Dvorak. <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,175>  
 He's right. The selection of games is stagnating. Will that lead to a games industry melt-down? I don't know. Would it be a bad thing? No way! It'd give me time to finish the backlog of RPGs & adventures I've purchased but haven't even started. It would let me enjoy my Playstation 2 a few more years without havng to buy the next type of console. About five years later, just as I finish playing that backlog of games & my PS2 wears out, someone will come out with a new game idea, & I'll be ready to buy it & the console to run it.

2. Some people comment on J.C.D.'s "Doom 4 . . ." article. <http://forums.3drealms.com/ubbthreads/showflat.php>  
I think most of these commentators were offended by J.C.D.'s article because they thought his perception meant they were dumb for playing the games they play. That wasn't his point at all.
3. "Ocean Data Support Global Warming Projections". By J.R. Pegg. <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/apr2005/2005-04-29-10.asp>



# Chapter 5

## 2005 May

### 5.1 Wednesday, May 4

1. “Most Americans say Iraq war not worth it: poll”. By CTV.ca News Staff. <http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1115218059971.43/?hub=World>

Most Americans should have thought of this before they:

- allowed Congress to give war powers to the President because they were too chicken-shit to declare war themselves, or
- re-elected George W. Bush as president.

Americans think war is something you turn on when you are angry & turn off when you are bored.

2. “57 percent of U.S. public think Iraq War was not worth it”. At Al-jazeera.com. [http://www.aljazeera.com/cgi-bin/news\\_service/middle\\_east\\_full\\_story.asp?service\\_id=8452](http://www.aljazeera.com/cgi-bin/news_service/middle_east_full_story.asp?service_id=8452)
3. “More Americans anti-Iraq”. At News24.com. [http://www.news24.com/News24/World/Iraq/0,6119,2-10-1460\\_1699456,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/World/Iraq/0,6119,2-10-1460_1699456,00.html)
4. “Airline Passengers to Be Asked for Data”. By Leslie Miller. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/04/AR2005050401228.html>

The purpose of asking for the new information is to reduce the likelihood of false matches on a list of suspicious people, but does it change anything at all? Doesn't a suspicious person just provide false answers to the new questions like he did to the old questions? If the airlines are aware of that possibility, they'll know that just because a questioned person differs from a suspicious person in a few details doesn't mean the questioned & the suspicious are different people. So they airline might want to search the questioned person. So why did the airline need to ask new questions at all?

## 5.2 Tuesday, May 10

1. “The Rise of ARGs”. By Adrian Hon at Gamasutra. <http://www.gamaseutra.com/features/200505>

## 5.3 Wednesday, May 11

### 5.3.1 Controversial News about American Programmers

1. “Can Johnny still program?”. By Ed Frauenheim at CNet News.com. 2005 April 19. [http://news.com.com/Can+Johnny+still+program/2008-1036\\_3-5675770.html?tag=nl](http://news.com.com/Can+Johnny+still+program/2008-1036_3-5675770.html?tag=nl)
2. “Can the U.S. still compete?”. By Charles Cooper at CNet News.com. 2005 April 15. [http://news.com.com/Can+the+U.S.+still+compete/2010-1071\\_3-5672106.html?tag=nl](http://news.com.com/Can+the+U.S.+still+compete/2010-1071_3-5672106.html?tag=nl)
3. “Fixing a busted IT research system”. By Ed Frauenheim at CNet News.com. 2004 September 21. [http://news.com.com/Fixing+a+busted+IT+research+system/2008-1008\\_3-5374992.html](http://news.com.com/Fixing+a+busted+IT+research+system/2008-1008_3-5374992.html)
4. “U.S. slips lower in coding contest”. By Ed Frauenheim at CNet News.com. 2005 April 7. [http://news.com.com/U.S.+slips+lower+in+coding+contest/2100-1022\\_3-5659116.html](http://news.com.com/U.S.+slips+lower+in+coding+contest/2100-1022_3-5659116.html)
5. “Johnny Can So Program”. By Norm Matloff of CNet News.com. 2005 May 10. [http://news.com.com/Johnny+can+so+program/2010-1007\\_3-5700858.html?tag=nefd.ac](http://news.com.com/Johnny+can+so+program/2010-1007_3-5700858.html?tag=nefd.ac)

Maybe he’s right that the authors of the preceding articles were being sensational, but he failed to convinced me that he is being realistic.

### 5.3.2 Does Java Suck

1. Forum thread “Are you java programmer?”. Started by “Annie” on Sun Developer Network. 2005 March 8. <http://forum.java.sun.com/thread.jspa?threadID=603794&mes>
2. “Java History” on Ward’s Wiki. <http://c2.com/cgi/wiki?JavaHistory>
3. “The IT Winter”. By Donald Fisk. 2003. <http://web.onetel.net.uk/~hibou/The%20IT%20Winter.l>
4. “Why Java is Not My Favourite Programming Language”. By Donald Fisk. 2004. <http://web.onetel.net.uk/~hibou/Why%20Java%20is%20Not%20My%20Favourite%20>
5. Forum thread “Does Java Suck?”. At Fog Creek Software. 2003 June 29. <http://discuss.fogcreek.com/joelonsoftware/default.asp?cmd=show&ixPost=54338>  
Starts interesting. Has some useful comments. Degenrates into nit-picky disagreements. (In other words, it’s typical of discussion threads.)
6. “Why Sun is right that Java sucks”. By “exa” at advogato.org. 2003 February 9. <http://advogato.org/article/624.html>

7. “Java Sucks”. By Nathan Marciniak. Written about 2000, I guess, with an update in or after 2002. <http://my.execpc.com/~saruman/rants/rants.java.html>  
Kind of a rant, & not very helpful, but I sympathize with the guy.
8. “Why Java Sucks For Sysadmins”. By Jeremiah Weiner? Written about 2003, I guess. <http://www.panix.com/userdirs/jdw/javasucks.html>
9. Blog entry “The reasons why everyone says Java sucks”. By javapro on [java.blogeasy.com](http://java.blogeasy.com). 2004 August 24. <http://java.blogeasy.com/article.view.run?articleID=14768>
10. “Lessons Learned Doing Java Programming for my Web Site”. By Ari Halberstad. 2003. <http://www.magiccookie.com/computers/lessons.html>
11. “Not Invented Here (Yet)”. By Ade Rixon at Big Bubbles (No Troubles). 2003 November 28. <http://www.big-bubbles.fluff.org/blogs/bubbles/archives/000295.html>

I was looking for a comparison of programmer quality by language because it seems that every chunk of Java code I see is too complicated. The closest I could find was these mostly interesting articles that Google recommended when I searched for “java programmers suck”. People mostly say “java sucks”, & then they point to run-time speed, which is just an implementation issue.

### 5.3.3 Metalinguistic Abstraction

One of the articles in the previous section mentioned the term “metalinguistic abstraction”. I think the article said it’s a cool term & a cooler idea. So I read about it.

1. The Metalinguistic Abstraction section of *Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs*

## 5.4 Thursday, May 12

1. “Wine development stifled by software patent”. By Ingrid Marson at [uk.builder.com](http://uk.builder.com). <http://uk.builder.com/programming/unix/0,39026612,39246157,00.htm>
2. United States Patent 5,628,016. “Systems and methods and implementing exception handling using exception registration records stored in stack memory”. By Peter Kukol. 1997 May 6. <http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=/netahtml/srchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=5>,

## 5.5 Thursday, May 19

1. “Comment: Murphy’s Law”, by Alexandra Weber Morales. In *Software Development Magazine*. 2004 November. [154]

2. “Coming out of cold storage”. By Alexandra Weber Morales. In Software Development Magazine. 2004 November. [153]
3. “The Craftsman: In the War Zone”. By Robert C. Martin. In Software Development Magazine. 2004 November. [141]
4. “Crosscut: It’s Not Metaprogramming”. By Gregor Kiczales. In Software Development Magazine. 2004 November. [109]

If Kiczales’s goal is not to apply mystique to Aspect Oriented Programming (AOP), he should re-consider his writing style.

Maybe S.D. magazine doesn’t give him enough column inches to do more than hint at information he would like to bestow.

5. “Interface: Paladins or Serfs”. By Warren Keuffel. In Software Development Magazine. 2004 November. [106]

This was easily the best article in the 2004 November issue of S.D. magazine. (The Craftsman column was the second best.)

## 5.6 Sunday, May 22

1. “Forum: For Programmers, Objects Are Not the Only Tool”. In Communications of the ACM. 2005 April. [272]

## 5.7 Wednesday, May 25

1. Peter J. Denning. “Is computer science science?”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005 April. [59]

Denning almost convinces me that computer science is a science. An interesting fact from the article: The European term for computer science is *informatics*.

2. Vinton G. Cerf. “Spam, Spim, and Spit”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005 April. [47]

I like Cerf’s suggestion that ISPs employ Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) to thwart spammers. I can imagine it being abused, but it could also be done right. Maybe an ISP’s AUP could limit the number of e-mail messages a customer may send (or out-bound connections to TCP port 25 a customer’s computer may create) per unit time. The ISP would not need to monitor the content of the messages. The limit could be high enough that non-spamming customers don’t even know it’s there, but low enough to stop spammers (or to throttle the output of zombies).

But what if an ISP in another legal jurisdiction (such as another country) has an Acceptable Use Policy that is more lenient than you want, so that ISP’s customers can send spam (according to your definition if not according to the ISP’s)?

3. Burros, Drummond, & Marinsons. “Knowledge management in China”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005 April. [42]  
Says the article: The Japanese have adopted the English-derived phrase “noreji management” to represent the rational Knowledge Management process.  
Cute.
4. Collberg and Kobourov. “Self-plagiarism in computer science”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005 April. [51]
5. Tan, Wang, and Peng. “A P2P genetic algorithm environment for the internet”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005 April. [263]  
This is a way cool method of implementing an evolver, & it’s the best use of peer-to-peer that I have seen.
6. Hai Zhuge. “Semantic grid: scientific issues, infrastructure, and methodology”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005 April. [284]
7. Bruce Schneier. “Two-factor authentication: too little, too late”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005 April. [184]
8. David A. Patterson. “The health of research conferences and the dearth of big idea papers”. *Communications of the ACM*, 2004 December. [168]
9. Thomas H. Barton. “TrueType fonts in PostScript”. *TUGboat*. Volume 23. Number 3. [19]
10. Antonis Tsolomitis. “The Kerkis font family”. *TUGboat*. Volume 23. Number 3. [268]  
I know little about fonts, so much of the article was over my head. Even so, I was impressed that the designers of Kerkis claim they are not font designers so their efforts will not be beautiful, but they made the font anyway because it was needed. That’s a good example for almost any endeavour.
11. Prasenjit Saha. “Rambutan: Literate programming in Java”. *TUGboat*. Volume 23. Number 3. [181]

## 5.8 Eugene V. Debs

Eugene Debs made a speech in 1918 against war & was sentenced to ten years in prison because of it. His speech is appropriate for us today. It is on the web at:

- <http://www.thememoryhole.org/war/debs-speech.htm>

Wikipedia also has an article about Eugene V. Debs<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene\\_V.\\_Debs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_V._Debs)

## 5.9 Thursday, May 26

1. “My friend Steve Glass, the con artist”. By Michael Brus. [41]

Steve Glass is one of the infamous reporters in the past ten years who wrote fiction & called it news. I took a break from watching the movie *Shattered Glass* to read more about it.

The other similar journalist of whom I’m aware is Jayson Blair.

2. Eli Lehrer. “What is truth?”. [124]

## 5.10 Friday, May 27

1. Seth Lloyd and Y. Jack Ng. “Black Hole Computers”. Scientific American. 2004 November. [133]

## 5.11 Saturday, May 28

1. Jonathan Lethem. *Gun, with Occasional Music*. 1994. [128]

An excellently unusual book. I wonder if Lethem started with an idea to immitate Raymond Chandler & then added his surreal quirks to spice it up, or if he started writing a surreal sci-fi & injected a Chandler-esque style to give the reader something familiar with which to identify while becoming acclimated to the concepts.

Notice how important memory is to the story. Reminds me of the movie *Memento*.

# Chapter 6

## 2005 June

### 6.1 Thursday, June 9

1. Ken Arnold. “Programmers are People, Too”. ACM Queue. 2005 June. [16]
2. “Climate Change: Spinning global science”. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. [34]
3. Don Thompson. “California town shaken by terrorism arrests”. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. [266]

### 6.2 Monday, June 13

1. hal Berghel & Jacob Uecker. “Wireless infidelity II: airjacking”. Communications of the ACM. 2004 December. [29]
2. Rebecca Blood. “How blogging software reshapes the online community”. Communications of the ACM. 2005 December. [33]  
Ms Blood’s blog is <http://www.rebeccablood.net>.

### 6.3 Tuesday, June 14

1. Cass R. Sunstein. “Democracy and filtering”. Communications of the ACM. 2004 December. [258]
2. Alexandre Gaudeul. “The L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X project: A case study of open source software”. TUGboat. 2003. [76]
3. Dr. Alun Moon. “Literate programming meets UML”. TUGboat. 2003. [152]

4. Luca Padovani. “MathML formatting with T<sub>E</sub>X rules, T<sub>E</sub>X fonts, and T<sub>E</sub>X quality”. TUGboat. 2003. [164]
5. Kalle Saastamoinen, Jaakko Ketola, Tuukka Kurppa and Liisa Torikka. “Enabling Web-access to a Database of Calculus Problems Using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, PHP and L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X2HTML”. TUGboat. 2003. [103]
6. John Sweat. “Clio and Climatology”. At The Anthropogene<sup>1</sup>. [260]  
Nice, brief, summary of Cliology. Nice web site overall, too.
7. Oren Patashnik. “BibT<sub>E</sub>X Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow”. TUGboat. [166]

## 6.4 Wednesday, June 15

1. Cleveland M. Blakemore. “Programming Your Own Text Games”. Ahoy! (a Commodore 64 programming magazine). 1988. [32]
2. Charles Carr. “IF: The End of an Error?”. ComputerEdge Magazine. 1998 February. [46]

### 6.4.1 Guantanamo Bay

1. “Rumsfeld address criticism on US detention centers”. ArabicNews.com. [236]  
Of all the articles I read about Guantanamo Bay today, this was the most complete.
2. “Rumsfeld: Guantanamo Key Part Of War On Terror”. Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty. [239]
3. “Rumsfeld: Detention Center Still Necessary”. Guardian Unlimited. [238]
4. “US Defence Secretary Rumsfeld defends Guantanamo”. Xinhua. [247]
5. “Rumsfeld: Terror detention center needed for years”. Jerusalem Post. [172]
6. “Rumsfeld defends Guantanamo Bay prison”. HindustanTimes.com. [237]

To summarize, Rummy (& Cheney yesterday, so by implication, the Bush Administration) says they need a Guantanamo Bay prison, whether or not it’s geographically located at Guantanamo Bay. They appear to ignore claims that the prisoners there are being held illegally. Watch how the Bush Administration changes its story when, some year soon, public opinion against Guantanamo Bay becomes loud enough that the prison is closed.<sup>2</sup>

Here’s a choice quote from Rummy:

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<sup>1</sup><http://webpages.charter.net/anthropogene/>

<sup>2</sup>I’m sure there are others. I wonder whether we will ever learn of them.

More than a year after the United States Supreme Court ruled that the US courts have the jurisdiction to consider appeals from the detainees held in the US Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay in Cuba, not a single detainee held there has had the lawfulness of his detention judicially reviewed.

Figure 6.1: A quote from Amnesty International in [255]

These included combatant status review tribunals to confirm that, in fact, each individual is, in fact, an unlawful enemy combatant. Every detainee currently at Guantanamo has received such a hearing. As a result, some 38 individuals were released.

Figure 6.2: A quote from Donald Rumsfeld in [236]

In this new era, it became clear that prosecuting terrorists after they strike was an inadequate approach, particularly given the lethal threats posed by violent extremists. [236], [237]

Have you seen the movie *Minority Report*? Rummy's attitude frightens me. Here are more articles about Guantanamo Bay, though not directly about Rummy's speech. . .

1. Jordan Tank. "Amnesty International reveals political bias". Echo Online. [264]

Mr. Tank shows that physical conditions at Guantanamo Bay are not the only injustices in the world, & maybe the worst, but he does not discuss the possibility that the human beings imprisoned there have been alienated from their inalienable rights by the very country that mentions inalienable rights in its Declaration of Independence.

2. "USA: New Amnesty International report on USA's 'war on terror' detentions". Amnesty International. [255]

Figure 6.1 shows a quote from Amnesty International in [255]. Figure 6.2 shows a quote from Donald Rumsfeld in [236].

How can both quotes be correct?

I guess they could both be correct if, as Amnesty International says, the Supreme Court ruled that (non-military) US courts have the jurisdiction to consider appeals, but unchecked executive power<sup>3</sup> has prevented anyone from taking action on the Supreme Court's decision.

### 6.4.2 Creationism

After all that Guantanamo Bay bad news (including some frightful quotes from Donald Rumsfeld), I needed a laugh.

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<sup>3</sup>For those who don't remember their elementary school civics class, the president of the United States is the chief of the Executive Branch of the government. So unchecked executive power is a president who is breaking the rules.

1. Creation Evidences<sup>4</sup> Museum. <http://home.texoma.net/~linesden/cem/cemindex.htm>
2. Creation Tips. <http://www.users.bigpond.com/rdoolan/index.html>

Despite the content aimed at Care Bears, the mechanics of the site are seriously nice. They chose an excellent web site designer.

“Gays live 20 years less”. Ahahahaha! No stop, you’re killing me!

Most points in their refutation of “the gap theory” can be paraphrased like this: “If the gap theory were true, it would disagree with the bible *here*, so the gap theory can’t be true”. (<http://www.users.bigpond.com/rdoolan/gaptheory.html>)

Compared to other Xians I’ve heard, their admission that “god *could* have used evolution to form life on earth” is an enlightened one. In fact, I can respect them for admitting the possibility. Of course, they reject the possibility because it would conflict with a literal interpretation of the bible.

They quote Darwin (“But the time will before long come, when it will be thought wonderful that naturalists, who were well acquainted with the comparative structure and development of man and other mammals, should have believed that each was the work of a separate act of creation.”) & claim that the quote is somehow in contradiction to theistic evolution. I don’t see the connection.

They say that evolutionary textbooks are in error because they don’t use god as an explanation. This shows a misunderstanding about what science is. Science is about what can be measured repeatedly, then predicted; the predictions can be tested (experimentation). Science cannot simply say “because god made it so”. Science is not anti-religious; science is doing its duty by asking for more detail.

In their “How can you believe the bible when you can’t prove it’s true” section, they list a few acts which, yes, to be pedantic, a modern person would not be able to confirm without a doubt. (But he could confirm any of them beyond a reasonable doubt.)

If their own argument was pursued, it could work against them because you could choose an even more trivial phenomenon, such as “how do you know heavy objects don’t fall faster than lighter ones”. A person on his own but with tools (which he might be able to make on his own), could confirm that the mass of an object has nothing to do with the rate at which it falls. Still with tools on his own, he could measure rates, predict them, predict falling times. Similarly, he could observe, experiment, & deduce all sorts of scientific phenomena. So unlike the list of historical events or the myths in the bible, a person really could deduce all sorts of scientific phenomena, on his own, personally, with his own senses & his own mind, without resort to a higher authority, nor even to an equal

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<sup>4</sup>“Evidences” is exactly as spelled on the site itself.

authority. The main limitation to what he could learn would be the time he could spend doing it & his own cleverness.

The web site says “No one doubts the existence of Julius Caesar, yet there is less evidence for his existence than for the historicity of the New Testament.” Wait a minute. Julius Caesar was a human being. The New Testament is a tome.<sup>5</sup> Comparing a person to a tome is like comparing apples to oranges.

Besides that, the site claims that there are lots of very old copies of the New Testament in many languages. Many copies of a book (or tome) do not make it fact. If everyone on the planet bought a copy of the next *Harry Potter* book, would that turn the fiction into fact?

Finally, the article makes the appeal that many scholars believe those who wrote the bible were divinely inspired, so their words must be true. This is circular, because what the article discusses is “how can you believe the bible when you can’t prove it is true”.

Besides the amazing thing that peeps can be so uninformed, the really amazing thing is that they believe that, somehow, *evolution* implies *Christianity is bunk*. Go figure.

## 6.5 Thursday, June 16

1. Kenneth P. Birman. “Like it or not, web services are distributed objects”. Communications of the ACM. 2004 December. [31]
2. Rodney Bates. “Syntactic Heroin”. ACM Queue. 2005 June. [21]
3. Rodney Bates. “Schizoid Classes”. ACM Queue. 2004 September. [20]

### 6.5.1 Three Sisters

- Lachrymarum
- Tenebrarum
- Suspiriorum

## 6.6 Friday, June 17

1. Yogesh Malhotra and Dennis F. Galletta. “Building Systems That Users Want to Use”. Communications of the ACM. 2004 December. [139]
2. Atanas Radenski. “A voyage to Oberon”. SIGCSE Bulletin. 1993. [174]  
The “Schizoid Classes” article mentioned Oberon-2, of which I hadn’t heard in over a decade, so I thought I’d take a peek at it.

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<sup>5</sup>A *tome* is, among other things, a collection of books.

3. Cong-cong Xing and Boumediene Belkhouche. “On pseudo object-oriented programming considered harmful”. *Communications of the ACM*. 2003. [53]  
The authors say that the ability to send messages to classes is “a Java peculiarity”. They are unaware of Smalltalk’s implementation of classes, in which each class is an object.
4. David Ungar and Randall B. Smith. “Self: The power of simplicity”. *OOPSLA ’87*. [271]
5. Jackie Hallifax. “Probe sought in Terri Schiavo 911 call”. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 2005 June 17. [87]
6. “Algerian man gets prison for al-Qaida lies”. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 2005 June 17. [204]
7. H. Josef Hebert. “H. Josef Hebert”. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 2005 June 17. [90]

### 6.6.1 Leibnitz Memex

In “As We May Think” [43], Vannevar Bush says “Two centuries ago Leibniz invented a calculating machine which embodied most of the essential features of recent keyboard devices, but it could not then come into use”.

1. Gottfried Leibniz<sup>6</sup> at Wikipedia

So Leibnitz constructed (& invented?) “the first mechanical calculator capable of multiplication & division”. He also created the modern form of a binary numbering system. Jeez.

And he was interested in “symbolic thought”. He tried to create an “alphabet of human thought”. So he was a pioneer of artificial intelligence.

I prefer Leibnitz’s notation to Newton’s.  $\frac{dx}{dt}$  Their disagreement is evidence (one case of many) that ideas happen when the environment is right for them. Maybe one person is first, but if that person wasn’t, then someone else would be. The idea will happen when the time is right regardless of which mind incubates it.

2. alphabet of human thought<sup>7</sup> on Wikipedia
3. mathesis universalis<sup>8</sup> on Wikipedia

Before Leibnitz tried to make an alphabet of human thought, a John Wilkins had a similar idea in 1668.

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<sup>6</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried\\_Leibniz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz)

<sup>7</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabet\\_of\\_human\\_thought](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabet_of_human_thought)

<sup>8</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathesis\\_universalis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathesis_universalis)

4. Calculus ratiocinator<sup>9</sup> at Wikipedia
5. Toki Pona<sup>10</sup> on Wikipedia

## 6.7 Saturday, June 18

1. Stefan A. Revets. “The Octavo Package”. TUGboat. 2002. [179]
2. Steve Sawyer. “Software development teams”. Communications of the ACM. 2004 December. [183]
3. Marco Fioretti. “Converting e-books to open formats”. Linux Journal. 2005 June. [70]
4. Chris DiBona. “Eof: why i don’t worry about SCO, and never did”. Linux Journal. 2005 June. [60]
 

“... friend of Linux, IBM”? Until the stock market crash of 1987, IBM was almost as bad as Microsloth is today. Times sure can change.

### 6.7.1 Credit Card Security Breach

I don’t recall hearing of any significant credit card security leaks in modern times, until this year. All of a sudden, it seems they are in the news fortnightly.

Why would we go a long time without hearing about credit card security problems, & then hear of a bunch? Were security problems non-existent before this year? (Yeah, right.) The crooks just recently figured out how to steal credit card numbers in modern times? (Almost as preposterous.) Or these problems have been happening all along, & we’re only now hearing of them? That’s plausible, though it makes me wonder why we would hear of them now.

So let’s do some research.

I am doing this research because of news story I heard on the radio minutes ago. Here are some brief facts:

- Fraud<sup>11</sup> at Card Systems Solutions Inc. of Tucson, Arizona, “could put at risk 40 million card holders of all brands”. [211]
- Master Card said yesterday that it will notify its card-issuing banks. [211] I presume the banks will notify the customers.
- How security was breached:
  - Card Systems contracted a computer virus which collected customer data. [211], [15]

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<sup>9</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calculus\\_ratiocinator](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calculus_ratiocinator)

<sup>10</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toki\\_Pona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toki_Pona)

<sup>11</sup>The news stories say “security breach”, but Master Card<sup>12</sup> says “fraud”, which is easier to type & possibly more accurate.

- A “hacker” exploited vulnerabilities on the network at Card Systems. [113]
- The culprit has not been identified. [113]
- 40 million credit card accounts are affected. [211]
- 14 million of the affected accounts are Master Card. [211], [15] ([113] says it was 13.9 million.)
- 22 million Visa customers are affected. [15]
- Resent credit card data leaks have affected Citigroup Inc., Bank of America Corp., & DSW Shoe Warehouse. [211]
- The United States FBI is investigating. [15]
- Master Card International detected the problems & tracked them to Card Systems Solutions in Arizona. [15]
- U.S. Secret Service (agent?) Paul Maslo [15]
- Jessica Antle is a spokeswoman for Master Card. [113]

So much for the most recent incident. So why do we see so many of these this year? Why haven’t we seen a steady rate of them (which would have led to improved security & then a reduced steady rate of them, I’m sure)?

Table 6.1 shows credit card information leaks. The “# accounts” column contains the number of accounts affected. The “companies” column lists the major players in the security breach, mixing both the negligent, the innocent, & the ignorant. Most of the data in the table is from [2]; building the table was slow going until I found that web page.

So much for numbers. But why is it happening? There is little discussion of that. One of the best (& only) I’ve seen so far is [173].

## 6.8 Sunday, June 19

### 6.8.1 Silent Hill on Xbox

A friend told me today that future releases in the *Silent Hill* series will be exclusive to Xbox. Let’s see if that is correct.

1. The Xbox version of *Silent Hill 2* contains an Xbox-exclusive sub scenario “Born From a Wish”. [38]
2. There is no mention of a future *Silent Hill* release that would be exclusive to Xbox on Konami’s web site. I checked the News, Press Room, Community (message boards), & other places on the site.

when	# accounts	companies
2005 Feb 15	$145 \times 10^3$	Choice Point
2005 Feb 25	$1.2 \times 10^6$	Bank of America
2005 Feb 25	$25 \times 10^3$	Pay Maxx
2005 Mar 8	$100 \times 10^6$	DSW Retail Ventures
2005 Mar 10	$32 \times 10^3$	Lexis Nexis
2005 Mar 11	$98.4 \times 10^3$	U.C. Berkeley
2005 Mar 11	$120 \times 10^3$	Bostom College
2005 Mar 12	$8.9 \times 10^3$	NV Dept. of Motor Vehicle
2005 Mar 20	$21 \times 10^3$	Northwestern Univ. Hacking
2005 Mar 20	$5 \times 10^3$	U of NV
2005 Mar 22	$59 \times 10^3$	CSU Chico
2005 Mar 23	$7 \times 10^3$	U.C. San Francisco
2005 Apr	about $300 \times 10^3$	Georgia DMV
2005 Apr 5	$16.5 \times 10^3$	MCI
2005 Apr 8	$185 \times 10^3$	San Jose Medical
2005 Apr 11	$106 \times 10^3$	Tufts University
2005 Apr 12	$280 \times 10^3$	Lexis Nexis
2005 Apr 14	$180 \times 10^3$	Polo Ralph Lauren
2005 Apr 14	$4.5 \times 10^3$	Calif Fas Track
2005 Apr 15	$21.6 \times 10^3$	CA Dept. of Health
2005 Apr 18	$1.3 \times 10^6$	DSW Retail Ventures
2005 Apr 20	$200 \times 10^3$	Ameritrade
2005 Apr 21	$19 \times 10^3$	Carnegie Mellon U
2005 Apr 26	$40 \times 10^3$	Mich. State Univ's Wharton Center
2005 Apr 26	$19 \times 10^3$	Christus St. Joseph's Hospital
2005 Apr 28	about $20 \times 10^3$	Georgia Southern U
2005 Apr 28	$676 \times 10^3$	Wachovia, Bank of America, PNC Financial Services Group and Commerce Bar
2005 Apr 29	$37 \times 10^3$	Oklahoma State U
2005 May 2	$600 \times 10^3$	Time Warner
2005 May 4	$1.6 \times 10^3$	CO. Health Dept
2005 May 5	$11.36 \times 10^3$	Purdue U
2005 May 7	$80 \times 10^3$	Dept. of Justice
2005 May 11	$9.9 \times 10^3$	Stanford U
2005 May 12	$2.4 \times 10^3$	Hinsdale Central
2005 May 16	750	Westborough Bank
2005 May 18	$8 \times 10^3$	Jackson Comm. College, Michigan
2005 May 19	$40 \times 10^3$	Valdosta State U, GA
2005 May 20	$11 \times 10^3$	Purdue U
2005 May 22	$40 \times 10^6$	Card Systems
2005 May 26	$5.5 \times 10^3$	Duke U
2005 May 27	$44.42 \times 10^3$	Cleveland State U
2005 May 28	$9 \times 10^3$	Merlin Data Services
2005 May 30	?	Motorola
2005 June 6	$3.9 \times 10^6$	Citi Financial
2005 June 10	$6 \times 10^3$	Fed Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC)

Table 6.1: Credit card leaks, when they happened, how many accounts were affected, & what organizations were involved

3. This message<sup>13</sup> at Game Winners claims that *Silent Hill 5* is in development & that the target platform(s) are a not-necessarily-proper subset of (Playstation 3, Xbox 360, next Nintendo). It looks like the message is on a message board, so the reliability is low. Another message<sup>14</sup>, this one at Clickable Culture<sup>15</sup>, makes the same claim. A news story<sup>16</sup> at Silent Hill Genesis<sup>17</sup> makes the same claims in the most detail.

I conclude that the next episode in *Silent Hill*...

- is currently in development,
- will be available on Playstation 3 &/or Xbox 360, &
- will be released in 2006.

At this time, there is no evidence that *Silent Hill 5* will be exclusive to Xbox 360 (nor to Playstation 3).

I don't care if it's available on Xbox 360, but I hope it will be available on Playstation 3 because I do not allow Microsloth products in my home. I believe Microsloth makes inferior products, & the cost (which I measure in more than just dollars) is too high, so I'm boycotting Microsloth. You don't have to agree with my motivations or my actions, but if you have a brain, you should admit that I'm behaving as a responsible capitalist by voting with my dollars.

## 6.9 Thursday, June 23

1. Process Specification Language (PSL). ISO 18629. [http://www.tc184-sc4.org/SC4\\_Open/SC4\\_Work\\_Products\\_Documents/PSL\\_\(18629\)/](http://www.tc184-sc4.org/SC4_Open/SC4_Work_Products_Documents/PSL_(18629)/)
2. Matt Apuzzo. "High court ruling divides New London". <http://www.newsday.com/news/local/wireless-ct-seizing-property-r0623jun23,0,122027.story?coll=ny-region-apconnecticut>
3. eminent domain at Wikipedia

## 6.10 Friday, June 24

1. "25 to Life" preview at ign.com. <http://ps2.ign.com/objects/683/683106.html>
2. Microsoft backs Eidos after senator attacks publisher<sup>18</sup> at Euro Gamer

<sup>13</sup><http://news.gamewinners.com/index.php/news/1631/>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.secretlair.com/index.php?/clickableculture/entry/silent-hill-5-on-next-gen-consoles/>

<sup>15</sup><http://www.secretlair.com/index.php?/clickableculture/>

<sup>16</sup><http://www.frozentears.net/matter/genesis/viewer.php?area=sh5&sec=sh5>

<sup>17</sup><http://www.frozentears.net/matter/genesis/>

<sup>18</sup>[http://www.eurogamer.net/article.php?article\\_id=59705](http://www.eurogamer.net/article.php?article_id=59705)

3. 25 to Life under fire again<sup>19</sup> at Euro Gamer

“Murder simulators”? Blaming Bill Gates for the content of video games?

The most believable claim is that the military uses video games to make kids more willing to kill, but don’t look to “25 to Life” for that. Look to America’s Army<sup>20</sup> for that. But in the current culture of the USA, I don’t think most kids were already willing enough to use force.

These perennial claims that video games will destroy the morals of humanity are ludicrous enough that they don’t require much time & effort to dispell (among people with a perspective), but they are still run to read about, on occasion.

4. CNN Talk Show Attacks 25 to Life<sup>21</sup> at Gamasutra
5. CNN’s 25 To Life Feeding Frenzy<sup>22</sup> at Press the Buttons
6. Grand Theft Auto “by City”<sup>23</sup> at Game Girl Advance

## 6.11 Saturday, June 25

1. Douglas Waud. What is T<sub>E</sub>X?<sup>24</sup>. TUGboat. 2003. [278]
2. The Worst My Generation Has To Offer<sup>25</sup> at Gaming Source
3. “Satanism” at Religious Tolerance.org

The ads are terrible, but the content is good.

4. Church of Satan, as foundd by Anton la Vey, has a web site. <http://www.churchofsatan.com/>
5. In praise of the devil<sup>26</sup>

Kinda cool. Insightful perspective. Reminds me of a story Joseph Campbell told about Lucifer’s only sin being loyalty to god’s original orders.

6. Official website of the Temple of Set. <http://www.xeper.org/>

The Info page is an extremely interesting history lesson, & I don’t just mean the ancient religions stuff or the specific history of the Temple of Set. It has a brief, new (to my mind), & correct (in my opinion) explanation of Christianity’s current & unfortunate revitalization which began in the 1980s.

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<sup>19</sup>[http://www.eurogamer.net/article.php?article\\_id=59751](http://www.eurogamer.net/article.php?article_id=59751)

<sup>20</sup><http://www.americasarmy.com/>

<sup>21</sup>[http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/news\\_index.php?story=5769](http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/news_index.php?story=5769)

<sup>22</sup>[http://www.pressthebuttons.com/2005/06/em25\\_to\\_lifeem\\_.html](http://www.pressthebuttons.com/2005/06/em25_to_lifeem_.html)

<sup>23</sup>[http://www.gamegirladvance.com/archives/2005/06/23/grand\\_theft\\_auto\\_by\\_city.html](http://www.gamegirladvance.com/archives/2005/06/23/grand_theft_auto_by_city.html)

<sup>24</sup><http://www.tug.org/TUGboat/Articles/tb24-2/tb77waud-what.pdf>

<sup>25</sup><http://forum.gamingsource.net/lofiversion/index.php/t4189.html>

<sup>26</sup><http://www.lucifer.com/lucifer.html>

Here's a thought-provoking quote: "Christianity's strength lies today, as throughout its history, in the absence of intellectual education and mental effort which it demands of its sheep". After I read that, my mind did a quick & informal scan of history, & I concluded that the claim (Christianity requires ignorance) is probably correct.

The white-on-blue text was hard on my eyes.

7. "neuro-linguistic programming" at Wikipedia

## 6.12 Sunday, June 26

### 6.12.1 Concrete Ships

A quiz show on the radio this morning asked a guest why concrete boats sink. The guest said "because of their weight", & the quiz show considered that the correct answer.

I knew the quiz show was incorrect. So I did some research.

1. There have been at least two fleets of concrete ships for the USA. At least one of the fleets was "experimental". [27], [1]
2. A few of the concrete boats made in WW2 are still afloat. [27]

Rumors & intuition say that concrete ships are impractical because of their weight, but a boat floats because its displacement is more than its weight. So a boat of any weight can float if it is shaped correctly, whether it's made of wood, steel, concrete, or osmium. [118]

### 6.12.2 Test Driven Design & Dynamic Languages

TDD might make more dynamic languages more popular because TDD removes the main objection to them. The main argument against dynamic languages is that the compilation phase cannot detect errors that it can detect in more static languages. (Type errors are the prime example of such errors.) With TDD, you don't need the compiler to detect those errors because your tests can detect them.

I guess this applies to any automated unit testing system, not just TDD.

Maybe we'll see dynamic languages become more popular. Specifically, I wonder if Smalltalk will make a come-back & become more popular than it ever was before.

## 6.13 Tuesday, June 29

1. Richard Lawrence. "Maths = typography?". TUGboat. 2003. [121]

## 6.14 Monday, June 27

1. Management Information Base for Network Management of TCP/IP-based internets (RFC 1156). 1990 May. [?].

Is this the main concise map of symbolic OIDs to numeric OIDs?



# Chapter 7

## 2005 July

### 7.1 Friday, July 1

1. Giles Wilson. “The Crazy Frog sound? That’s my fault”. BBC News Magazine. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4210407.stm>
2. The buzzing frog movie. <http://cybertiggyr.com/gene/tae2005/1119900738-2.wmv>
3. “Nurture By Nature”. At 1 Up. <http://www.1up.com/do/feature?cId=3141733>

#### 7.1.1 Software Components

I’ve been skimming a giant book of software components. (I read it a long time ago.)

I remember telling a friend about components, & he asked “what do they buy you”, or maybe he pointed out that you can do without components all the things you can do with them. I wasn’t foolish enough to disagree that non-component software could accomplish everything that components do except maybe some “essense of components” subtleties (& vice versa, if we are considering subtleties), but I still said components did some things different or better.

But now I recant. I’m currently undecided between these two ideas:

1. Components offer nothing other than “essense of components” subtleties, & those subtleties are more useful than the alternatives *only* if your requirements explicitly demand them. In other words, the main reason to program components is to get that job that pays you to program components. (Why would they want components? They are following hype, probably, or maybe they were given requirements for component-specific subtleties.)

2. The only thing components offer are a specific method of distribution which might actually be useful in a practical way. Components offer binary distribution of a merger of shared libraries & objects. So if you wanted the benefits of shared libraries (which definitely has its uses) in an object oriented way, components could be practical.

Like shared libraries, components could help you save a lot of disk space. Okay, that's an advantage.

The benefit of binary distribution by itself is only when your target platform doesn't have a compiler. That's the reality with Winders, but it doesn't have to be. Every Winders computer could come with a compiler. If companies were worried about revealing their proprietary source code, Winders (& other computers) could offer a standard intermediate language & a compiler for it. The software developers would compile to the intermediate language & ship that. (In fact, this is one of the unrealised features of dot-Net.<sup>1</sup> Also, there are many advantages to compiling on the target machine. [257])

The other benefit of shared libraries & components is that you can change the behaviour of your program without recompiling. If "change the behaviour" means "fix bugs or add features" (as opposed to "entirely change the focus of the program"), I'm not sure it's all that useful in a production environment. Sure, it is definitely cool, but is it necessary/practical? I'm not sure.<sup>2</sup>

So I'm undecided between these two points of view.

Overall, I now dislike the concept of components because the only reason programmers think they are the best thing since slice bread (& before web services) is hype &/or the programmer's own misunderstanding of the pure & practical concepts of "what needs to be done" and "how do get it done simply".

Component systems are still nifty from a not-necessarily-practical "how does it work" point of view.

## 7.2 Sunday, July 3

### 7.2.1 Understanding Modern Political Events

Yesterday, I read about the United States's "War on Terror" to refresh my memory of the facts. I tried to keep notes so it would require less work to refresh my memory the next time. I also wanted to find important facts & document them with refernces so I could argue...er, I mean *discuss* the issues with people who can't see the light...er, I mean, people who don't share my opinion.

Okay, I'll be serious now.

I learned that making notes of such a complex issue is really difficult. There are so many people & organizations involved, organizations containing other

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<sup>1</sup>A promised but unimplemented feature of a Microsloth product? Surprise surprise.

<sup>2</sup>Notice that the shared libraries which offer the most benefit are those which are almost universal & which change rarely. An example is the C run time library.

organizations<sup>3</sup>, disputed alliances, events with multiple effects, & a wide range of time resolutions.<sup>4</sup> More importantly, sometimes you want to see all events that happend during a period of time (such as on 2001 September 11), while other times, you want to see events involving a particular person (such as Colin Powel). My usual technique of taking notes isn't sufficient.

I'm not saying the issue is too complicated for a human mind to comprehend. I'm saying that it's too complicated for a human mind to comprehend when that human mind has a day job. More importantly, it's so complicated that a human mind with a day job, after finding some important conclusion, will not have enough time to convince another human mind (also with a day job).

This applies to issues other than this "War on Terror".<sup>5</sup> It could apply to socialized health care, the economics of retirement, and convoluted & questional campaign funding<sup>6</sup> to name just a few issues that are current in the politics of the USA.

Maybe the way to understand complicated issues like this one is to track events, people, & organizations on a finer scale & use software to view those things in different ways.

People & organizations might might be connected with links such as "loyal to", "held responsible by", or "hates".

Events might be connected to the involved people & organizations. They could also have a time, & the resolution of the time would be significant. For example, 2005 July would mean "some time during the month of 2005 July"; 2005 July 4 would mean "some time during the day of 2005 July 4"; and "2005 July 4 21:01" would mean "some time during the minute of 2005 July 4 21:01". I suspect resolution down to the minute would be sufficient for all political issues.

The way I've described it, with "links", it sounds like I'm thinking of a relational or networked database, but I'm sure a quick & dirty (& sufficient) implementation could use plain text if you were consistent in how you spell names. For example, George Washington would always need to be "George Washington", never just "Washington".

If each event was a single line in a file, starting with the date in ISO format (such as "20050704T2101" for 2005 July 4 21:01), you could use standard un\*x tools for a decent implementation. Here are some examples:

- To see all events in chronological order: `sort events.dat`.
- To see all events involving Colin Powell, using just "Powell" to identify that man: `grep -i Powell events.dat`.

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<sup>3</sup>Example of an organization containing another: Government of Afghanistan contains(?) Taliban contains Osama Bin Laden & his followers. Another example: United States the country contains the populace & the government, the government composed of representatives from the populace, the government creates agencies, some of which impede the rights of the populace, others of which protect those rights. It's complicated stuff.

<sup>4</sup>Sometimes the hour & minute when something happens is important. Many other times, the day is fine. Still other times, the month is sufficient.

<sup>5</sup>Could you tell that I think the phrase "War on Terror" is stupid?

<sup>6</sup>Affectionately known as "follow the money".

- To see all events involving Colin Powell in chronological order: “`grep -i Powell events.dat |sort`”.
- To see all things George W. Bush said about Osama Bin Laden (using “bush” to identify the former & “bin laden” to identify the latter): “`grep -i bush events.dat |grep -i "bin laden" |sort`”. This would include everything Bush said about Bin Laden, but also any event involving both men, including things Bin Laden said about Bush or the time at the party when Bin Laden & Bush shared a bong.<sup>7</sup>

You might use `grep` & `sort` like this to generate a report that contained all events in one section & then a section for each person or organization involved that showed the events involving that person or organization.

The text of the events could be HTML, complete with links to the web pages that discuss each event.

Well, hell. When I started writing this, it was to show how difficult the project would be & leave my thoughts on how to do it if I ever had the time. Now it looks simple.

### 7.3 Monday, July 4

1. James Fallows. “Bush’s Lost Year”. *The Atlantic Monthly*. 2004 October. [68]

### 7.4 Tuesday, July 5

1. Virginia Woolf. *Orlando*. 1928. [282]
2. Barbara Chepaitis. *Something Unpredictable*. 2003. [50] I didn’t actually finish this book. Read about two-thirds of it.
3. Alex Irvine. “Shepherded by Galatea”. *Asimov’s*. 2003 March. [97]
4. Lucius Shephard. “Only Partly Here”. *Asimov’s*. 2003 March. [193] Excellent story, though it should have ended about one page earlier.

### 7.5 Wednesday, July 6

1. Joe Haldeman. “Giza”. *Asimov’s*. 2003 March. [85]
2. Charles Sheffield. “The Waste Land”. *Asimov’s*. 2003 March. [192]

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<sup>7</sup>There was no such time at a party. I’m just kidding. Too bad for the rest of us. If there had been such a time, 2001 September 11 would have been just another day.

## 7.6 Thursday, July 7

1. Jennifer LeClaire. “Adobe Reader Flaw Depicts Emerging Vulnerability Trend”. Tech News World. 2005 July 7. [123]

### 7.6.1 Terrorist Attacks on London

1. “Europe Reacts to London Bombings”. dw-World.de. [215]
2. Jane Wardell. “Three blasts rock subway, at least 40 killed and more than 300 wounded”. SignOnSanDiego.com. [277]
3. Trevor Datson & Mike Collett-White. “Blasts rock London, Blair breaks off G8 meeting”. Reuters. [55]

The facts appear to be:

1. This morning (what time zone?), three bombs exploded at different locations on the London Underground.
  - (a) First explosion was at 8:51<sup>8</sup> in the morning, 100 yards into underground tunnel. 7 people dead.
  - (b) Second was at 8:56, different location. 21 people dead.
  - (c) Third took out at least two trains, maybe three. 5 people dead.
2. A fourth bomb destroyed a double-decker bus above ground, less than 60 minutes after first. Fatality count not released yet.
3. The death toll is expected to rise.
4. There was no warning or bomb threat before the bombs, though there are many bomb threats now, probably from quacks.
5. As of 2005-Jul-07T07:40 PDT, it is unknown whether the perpetrators were suicide bombers or left some bomb packages on the transit system.
6. There are no confirmed claims of responsibility, though there is one claim on a web site that is allegedly connected with Al Qaeda.
7. Tony Blair halts the G-8 summit. [55]
8. As of 2005-Jul-07T06:35 PDT, Tony Blair had labeled the bombs as terrorism (“terrorist attacks”, his words). He also said they were designed to coincide with the G-\* summit in Scotland yesterday in which London was awarded the 2012 Olympics.

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<sup>8</sup>I have also read 8:30 in [277].

As of 2005-Jul-07T7:50, the only claim of responsibility comes from the web site of “The Secret Organization of al-Qaeda in Europe” (SOAQE)<sup>9</sup>. SOAQE says the attacks were in retaliation for Britain’s involvement in Iraq & Afghanistan. (Note that this is in contrast to Tony Blair’s explanation for the attacks.)

On 2004 March 11, there were similar attacks on the trains in Madrid. They killed 191.

Senator Sam Brownbag(?), Republican from Kansas, on the radio at this moment claims that the attacks were because the G-8 summit was trying to think of ways to help poor countries in Africa. He said the poor countries in Africa will be an important tool to combating terrorism. I do not agree with his claim. Blair’s explanation & the claim on the SOAQEd web site make more sense.

Spanish officials note the similarity between today’s attacks in London & last year’s attacks in Madrid. They say Madrid is now on maximum alert. They are closing the hen coop more than a year after the fox has visited.

## 7.7 Monday, July 11

1. Amy Bechtel. “Forget Me Not”. Analog. 2002 June. [23].
2. Brenda Cooper and Larry Niven. “Finding Myself”. Analog. 2002 June. [12]  
Cooper & Niven’s short story was excellent.
3. Rudy Rucker and Bruce Sterling. “Junk DNA”. Asimov’s. 2003 January. [8]

## 7.8 Tuesday, July 12

1. Matea Gold. “Panel Puts Public Broadcasting Chair in Hot Seat”. LA Times. 2005 July. [80]  
What does it mean to “secretly monitor” a broadcast?  
I guess I can understand why a Republican would keep tabs on the Diane Rehm Show, since she interviews some people who sometimes criticize our government mildly, but Tavist Smiley? What about that show could possibly irritate anyone who wasn’t a KKK member? I mean, really.
2. “Proposed Cuts to Public Broadcasting Budget”. NPR. 2005 June 24. [233]
3. “<http://www.voanews.com/english/2005-07-11-voa44.cfm>”

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<sup>9</sup>SOAQE? Is that pronounced like “soak”, as in “Ha! You’ve been *SOAQEd* with out Super Soaker!”

### 7.8.1 Day of the Triffids

I saw the movie the other day. Here are some thoughts about it.

Bill, the eye patient & main character, begins the movie as does the main character in *28 Days Later*. The viewer has a bigger clue about what's happening in *Triffids* than in *28 Days*, but the stories of the two main characters begin similarly. They wake up in an empty hospital & don't know where everyone went.

Bill's story begins with irony. When we first see him, he is effectively blind due to a head bandage. The next day, when almost everyone is blind, his sight is fine.

Like modern zombie movies<sup>10</sup>, *Triffids* asks what would happen if a lot of people failed to perform their roles in society. In *Triffids*, those people become mildly detrimental because they bumble around & might cause a sort of small, bumbling riot. In zombie movies, people fail to fill their roles, *and* they become actively hostile.

The plant attack scenes remind me of the Doctor Who story, *Seeds of Doom*. In *Triffids*, they even use the same dark green colour on the skin of some of the victims.

So the triffid plants arrived during an earlier meteor shower? They were harmless until the meteor shower which we see in the movie? Were these meteor showers an attack? Or just very bad luck?

Killer plants arrive from outer space. Reminds me of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

There are three possible results if so many people went blind:

1. They die because they can't care for themselves, & society can't care for them.
2. They live, but they are a detriment to society. Society will feel a huge relief when the last of these blind people die off, but that could take something like 60 years for the ones who were children when they went blind.
3. In helping the blind people cope with life, society modifies itself & its fixtures (such as urban planning, transportation, & services) so that humans no longer rely on sight as much as we do now. I don't mean humanity becomes sightless. I mean we expand our collective & personal methods of coping with the world.

I am genuinely curious about what happened to the world of *Triffids* after the movie ended & while that world learned to cope with all those blind citizens.

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<sup>10</sup>In my opinion, the era of modern zombie movies began with the original *Night of the Living Dead*. Compare with earlier zombie movies, which were founded more on voodoo, & with the paranoia movies of the 1950s, such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *Invaders from Mars*.

## 7.9 Saturday, July 16

### 7.9.1 Boomer

1. *Parasite Dolls*. 2002. A movie. Directed by Kazuto Nakazawa and Naoyuki Yoshinaga.
2. *Bubblegum Crisis: Tokyo 2040a*". 1998. A television series. Directed by Hiroki Hayashi.

I notice that characters in both these animes refer to robots as “boomers”. Interesting coincidence.

Oops. Not such a coincidence. Chiaki Konaka wrote the screenplay for Bubblegum & has the full writing credits for Parasaito.

I wonder how the original Bubblegum Crisis referred to robots. It’s been so long since I saw it that I don’t remember if it referred to them at all.

Compare & contrast “boomer” & similar terms:

term	title	what	year	author
android, realien	Tomorrow’s Eve	novel	1880?	Mathias Villiers de l’Isle-Adam
robot	Rossum’s Universal Robots	play	1920	Karel Capek
droid	Star Wars	movie	1977	George Lucas
replicant	Blade Runner	movie	1982	Philip K. Dick
boomer	BC: Tokyo 2040	TV show	1998	Hiroki Hayashi
persocom	Chobits	TV show	2002	Clamp
boomer	Parasite Dolls	OVA?	2002	Nakazawa and Yoshinaga
realian	Xenosaga	game	2002	?

## 7.10 Thursday, July 21

1. Surajit Chaudhuri. “An overview of query optimization in relational systems”. PODS ’98: Proceedings of the seventeenth ACM SIGACT-SIGMOD-SIGART symposium on Principles of database systems. 1998. [49]

## 7.11 Friday, July 22

1. Sebastian Rotella. “Police Kill Suspect at London Subway Station<sup>11</sup>”. Los Angeles Times. 2005 July 22. Here is a quotation from the article:

Mark Whitby, a commuter, told BBC television that he was sitting on the subway train reading the newspaper when the fugitive and the police burst through the open doors. The man

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<sup>11</sup>[http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-072205london\\_lat,0,5343255.story?coll=la-home-headlines](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-072205london_lat,0,5343255.story?coll=la-home-headlines)

was a stocky young Asian, possibly of Pakistani descent, and wore a baseball cap and a padded winter-style coat, Whitby said. After a melee in which the suspect fell or was wrestled to the floor, an officer opened fire at close range as passengers screamed and cowered, Whitby said.

“I heard a load of noise. . . people saying, ‘Get out, get out’,” Whitby said. “I saw an Asian guy. He ran on to the train, he was hotly pursued by three plainclothes officers. . . he half tripped and was half pushed to the floor and the policeman nearest to me had the black automatic pistol in his left hand. He held it down to the guy and unloaded five shots into him.”

2. Robert Barr. “London Police Kill Man at Subway Station<sup>12</sup>”. Guardian Unlimited. 2005 July 22.
3. Damir Bersinic. “No Need to Get ANSI about SQL 99 Join Syntax<sup>13</sup>”. Cert Cities. 2002 June 5.

At last someone has given me a good reason to use JOIN – portability. I disagree with the readability claim, & the dozens of programmers who tell me it’s more efficient at run-time or that (get this) “you just can’t join two tables without JOIN; it simply won’t work” are foolish. But portability, that’s a good reason.

## 7.12 Monday, July 25

### 7.12.1 Cursed Time

1. Lawmakers move to extend daylight-saving time<sup>14</sup>. CNN.com. 2005 July 22.

Sometimes, I think that even nearly-pacifist me could indeed be motivated to assassinate. . .

I’ve been wishing we’d ditch Daylight Stupid Time & even time zones ever since I wrote the time-handling code for a telephony switch testing system in 1997.

In 2000, I had to write a similar chunk of code for a 9-11 system with a Russian programmer. As he realized the shittiness of DST & time zones, one day he shouted (in his thick Russki accent) “Cursed time!” (Hee hee. It still cracks me up.)

For the nitty-gritty of just how amazingly horridly unbelievably contemptibly distgustingly shitty time-related code must be due to a shitty time-keeping system, look at P.J.Plauger’s implementation of C’s “time.h” functions in The Standard C Library[?, plauger:library]

<sup>12</sup><http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,1280,-5159657,00.html>

<sup>13</sup><http://certcities.com/editorial/columns/story.asp?EditorialsID=106>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/07/22/congress.daylighttime.ap/index.html>

In case you're interested, there is a readable history of Daylight Stupid Time at <http://www.timechange.com/dls/>. It all goes back to some English gentleman who was personally insulted by late risers. So it's an example of the practical harm that can be done by a large ego.

I apologize for sounding like a know-it-all. I really am just disgusted<sup>15</sup> interested in this issue.

Okay, I'm confused. The article sez: "farmers complained that a two-month extension could adversely affect livestock".

In what way would DST affect livestock at all? Shouldn't the farmer get up when the sun comes up (or something like that)? Why does the farmer, or his livestock, give fuck-all what the clock says?

I could understand (not necessarily agree with) complaints from Wall Street, politicians, restaurants, television networks, & others, but from farmers on behalf of livestock? Seriously, I'm confused.

### 7.12.2 At Least Someone Has the Right Idea

1. Antone Roundy. "Daylight Savings Time is Busted<sup>15</sup>".
2. By "Angel". daylight savings?. At [rant.mivix.com](http://rant.mivix.com). 2003 November 2.

### 7.12.3 The Crooks Running the Asylum

1. Dan Froomkin. "What Did the President Know?<sup>16</sup>". Washington Post. 2005 July 25.
2. "The secret Downing Street memo<sup>17</sup>". Britain's Sunday Times. 2005 May 1.
3. Larisa Alexandrova and John Byrne. "The unofficial war: U.S., Britain led massive secret bombing campaign before Iraq war was declared<sup>18</sup>". 2005 June 27.
4. Eric Boehlert. "The Ghost of Ed Meese<sup>19</sup>". 2005 July 25.
5. "Bush aide waited to inform staff of CIA leak probe<sup>20</sup>". 2005 July 25.

## 7.13 Thursday, July 28

1. John Wilkins. "Misunderstanding Evolution<sup>21</sup>". 2005 June 12. [280]

<sup>15</sup><http://antone.geckotribe.com/bustedworld/2004/07/daylight-savings-time-is-busted.php>

<sup>16</sup>[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/blog/2005/07/25/BL2005072500724\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/blog/2005/07/25/BL2005072500724_pf.html)

<sup>17</sup><http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-1593607,00.html>

<sup>18</sup>[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/The\\_unofficial\\_war\\_U.S.\\_and\\_Britain\\_led\\_massive\\_air\\_campaign\\_before\\_Iraq\\_war\\_be\\_06](http://rawstory.com/news/2005/The_unofficial_war_U.S._and_Britain_led_massive_air_campaign_before_Iraq_war_be_06)

<sup>19</sup>[http://news.yahoo.com/s/huffpost/20050725/cm\\_huffpost/004649/nc:742](http://news.yahoo.com/s/huffpost/20050725/cm_huffpost/004649/nc:742)

<sup>20</sup>[http://wireservice.wired.com/wired/story.asp?section=Breaking&storyId=1067178&tw=wn\\_wire\\_story](http://wireservice.wired.com/wired/story.asp?section=Breaking&storyId=1067178&tw=wn_wire_story)

<sup>21</sup><http://evolvethought.blogspot.com/2005/06/misunderstanding-evolution.html>

## 7.14 Friday, July 29

1. Anne Saunders. “Libertarians propose taking Breyer’s land”. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 2005 July 29. [182]
2. Dawn Kawamoto. “Amazon files for Web services patent”. C Net News.com. 2005 July 28.
3. David Twiddy. “Some papers pull, edit ‘Doonesbury’ strip”. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 2005 July 29. [270]
4. “Interview: A Conversation with David Anderson”. ACM Queue. 2005 July/August. [222]
5. Anthony J. Sebok. “Should Plame sue Rove?”. CNN.com. 2005 July 29. [187]
6. Dan Margolis. “Calls grow to fire Karl Rove”. People’s Weekly World. 2005 July 30. [140]
7. Isaac Goldstein. “Commentary: How Karl Rove Got Where He Is Today”. Berkeley Daily Planet. 2005 July 29. [82]
8. “Karl Rove, Michael Ledeen Spies Procured Forged Niger Documents”. Bella Ciao. 2005 July 29. [227]

## 7.15 Saturday, July 30

1. Melvin E. Conway. “Proposal for an UNCOL”. Communications of the ACM. 1958. [54]
2. David V. Mason. “A functional intermediate form for diverse source languages”. IBM Press. 1996. [145]
3. W. B. Dobrusky and T. B. Steel. “Universal computer-oriented language”. Communications of the ACM. 1961. [61]

## 7.16 Sunday, July 31

1. H.P. Lovecraft. “The Lurking Fear” in [136]
2. Neal Stephenson. *Snowcrash*. 1992. [256]
3. RenderMan Repository<sup>22</sup>
4. Sally McBride. “Pick My Bones with Whispers”. [146]

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<sup>22</sup><http://www.renderman.org/>



# Chapter 8

## 2005 August

### 8.1 Monday, August 12

1. Jane Hadley. “Getting There: Law says left lanes are for passing only”. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 2005 August 1. [?]

Gene dances around the room like Snoopy in “Charlie Brown Christmas” & chants “I told you so! I told you so!”

2. Jim Vertuno. “Watchdog group attacks school Bible study”. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 2005 August 1. [273]
3. Jonathan Beale. “Bush weighs into evolution debate”. BBC News. 2005 August 9. [22]

Question for the reader: If a man is a president, is he necessarily an expert on biology?

This is choice: “The US president told newspaper reporters in Texas that children should be taught about intelligent design so they could better understand the debate about the origins of the universe.”

Another question for the reader: Does Darwin’s theory of evolution address astrophysics?

4. “Bush passes by protesters, but doesn’t stop”. 2005 August 12. [207]
5. “Data error may have hidden some warming”. 2005 August 12. [213]
6. Bill Palmer. “Memo to Microsoft: here’s what happened the last time someone declared war on the iPod”. At iPod Garage. 2005 August 12. [165]

## 8.2 Tuesday, August 16

It appears that clisp on Winders buffers I/O independantly of Lisp's view of I/O streams. I mean, you can write a bunch of data to a file, opening & closing the file each time (as you might for a log file), but clisp writes the data to the file in big chunks, not in the lines you wrote to a file.

Here's an example:

```
(dotimes (i 1000000)
  (with-open-file (strm "wahwah" :direction :output
                    :if-exists :append)
    (format strm "~%~A" i)))
```

Here's an equivalent scrap of C code:

```
int
main ()
{
  FILE *fp;
  int i;

  for (i = 0; i < 1000000; ++i) {
    fp = fopen ("wahwah", "a");
    fprintf (fp, "%d\n", i);
    fclose (fp);
  }
  return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

If you run “tail -f” on the wahwah file, & you run the C version of the program, tail will show you a line at a time. They might scroll so fast that line-at-a-time & big chunks look the same, but if we put a sleep in the loop, you'd see a line at a time for sure.

You'd expect the same thing in Lisp, & maybe you'll get it on some Lisp/OS combinations, but with clisp on Winders, it still writes big chunks, not a line at a time. Specifically, it is clisp version 2.32 (I think) & Winders 2000. The file is on the local file system, not a remote file system.

## 8.3 Monday, August 22

Today President Bush said “a policy of retreat and isolation will not bring us safety”. [206] That's a curious point, considering that many people who have been saying all along that invading Iraq was unjust or unhelpful have also said that we should be nice to other nations for a change, help them out. Those people have not demanded isolationism. In modern political form, Bush is implying that “troops out of Iraq” implies “retreat & isolationism”.

### 8.3.1 Snowcrash

The book *Snowcrash* mentions Tulare on page 273. I grew up around Tulare, California. Do yourself a favor & don't go there or anywhere near it.

The neuralinguistic virus part of the story in *Snowcrash* reminds me of a short story by Fritz Leiber. In that story, a musician stumbles across the ultimate ear worm. Leiber writes it as “toom titty titty toom toom” or something like that, which is also the title of the short story. The tune overtakes much of society. Other artists translate it to other media: paintings, literature, movies, billboards, & everything else. Just before all cultures in the world are consumed with the virus, someone discovers that it was created intentionally by a wizard hundreds of years before whose intention was to destroy mankind.

I wonder if Leiber's story was some of the inspiration for Stephenson's.

## 8.4 August 12

1. Adolph & Matin. “Taking the first step”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [11]
2. Robert C. Martin. “Programmer's progress”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [142]
3. Floyd Norris. Off the charts: Across U.S., shrinking paychecks<sup>1</sup>. *International Herald Tribune*. 2005 September 3.

## 8.5 Monday, August 22

Today President Bush said “a policy of retreat and isolation will not bring us safety”. [206] That's a curious point, considering that many people who have been saying all along that invading Iraq was unjust or unhelpful have also said that we should be nice to other nations for a change, help them out. Those people have not demanded isolationism. In modern political form, Bush is implying that “troops out of Iraq” implies “retreat & isolationism”.

## 8.6 Thursday, September 22

1. Officer: 9/11 panel didn't receive key information. *CNN.com*. 2005 August 17. [231]
2. Devlin Barrett. 9/11 panel rejects claim that U.S. knew of Atta. *Chicago Sun-Times*. 2005 September 14. [18]
3. Jack Kelly. Commentary: Able Danger's hidden hand. *The Washington Times*. 2005 August 15. [105]

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/09/02/business/wbmarket03.php>

4. "Able Danger" at Wikipedia
5. <http://www.cybermoonstudios.com/8bitDandD.html>

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# Chapter 9

## 2005 September

### 9.1 Tuesday, September 6

1. Ron Hira. “Eroding opportunities”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [92]
2. Lauri O’Connell. “False protection”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [160]
3. Gary McGraw. “The 7 touchpoints of secure software”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [149]
4. Christopher Hawkins. “11 clients you need to fire right now”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [89]
5. Warren Keuffel. “Spectacular falls”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [108]
6. Ravella & Macnusson. “Let the super guilds speak”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [7]
7. Adolph & Matin. “Taking the first step”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [11]
8. Robert C. Martin. “Programmer’s progress”. *Software Development*. 2005 September. [142]
9. Floyd Norris. “Off the charts: Across U.S., shrinking paychecks<sup>1</sup>”. *International Herald Tribune*. 2005 September 3.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/09/02/business/wbmarket03.php>

## 9.2 Friday, September 23

1. Alex Johnson. ‘Intelligent design’ faces first big court test. MSNBC. 2005 September 23. [99]

## 9.3 Monday, September 26

1. “US evolution court battle opens”. BBC News. 2005 September 26. [249]
2. ‘Intelligent Design’ Debate Underway in Pa. Court. FOX News. 2005 September 26. [220]

Fox covered the story exactly as I would expect from them, right up to misreporting that the prosecutor referred to Intelligent Design as a “religious theory”. A major fact in the case is that Intelligent Design is not a theory, therefore not science.

If someone disbelieves Darwin’s theory of evolution because their bible provides a differing explanation, they should remember Galileo. Let’s remember Galileo together, right now:

- Galileo was a vocal endorser of Copernicanism, which claimed that the Earth was not the center of the universe & that the Earth orbited our sun.
- This contradicted the bible. Here’s a description of the contradiction & controversy from the article about Galileo Galilei<sup>2</sup> in “The Catholic Encyclopedia” at New Advent: “What, more than all, raised alarm was anxiety for the credit of Holy Scripture, the letter of which was then universally believed to be the supreme authority in matters of science, as in all others. When therefore it spoke of the sun staying his course at the prayer of Joshua, or the earth as being ever immovable, it was assumed that the doctrine of Copernicus and Galileo was anti-Scriptural; and therefore heretical”.
- In 1616, the Inquisition, exercising authority granted it by the Catholic Church, decreed the Copernicanism was heretical & that spreading the ideas of Copernicanism was illegal.
- Later, in 1630, the Inquisition *condemned* Galileo for publishing a book in which he attempted to prove that Copernicus’s theory was correct.
- 350 years later, is widely believed now that Galileo & Copernicus were right.<sup>3</sup>
- So the church was wrong to believe that the bible is always literally right.

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06342b.htm>

<sup>3</sup>Yes, this is an understatement.

- If someone disagrees with the theory of evolution, should they also disagree with Copernicus to maintain consistency?

Also see the entry for Galileo Galilei<sup>4</sup> at Wikipedia.

## 9.4 Wednesday, September 28

1. Terry M. Neal. GOP Ignores Lessons of Democrats' Past Mistakes. Washington Post. 2005 September 28. [158]

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<sup>4</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo\\_Galilei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo_Galilei)



# Chapter 10

## 2005 October

### 10.1 Tuesday, October 4

1. Daniel Aloi. “Cornell researchers receive \$2 million federal grant for computational social sciences project using Web archive<sup>1</sup>”.

Translation: Two million dollars to study cliology, or at least to build tools which will help study cliology.

Inference: Cliology soon to be recognized as a money-generating science.

2. Prabhakaran, Arpaci-Dusseau, & Arpaci-Dusseau. “Model-Based Failure Analysis of Journaling File Systems”.

### 10.2 Sunday, October 9

1. Mike “Mish” Shedlock. “What Housing Bubble<sup>2</sup>”. At New Fuel Now<sup>3</sup>. 2005 August 5.

### 10.3 Monday, October 10

1. Literate Programming<sup>4</sup> web site.

### 10.4 Wednesday, October 12

1. Jane Hadley. “A frank discussion about why you’re stuck in traffic<sup>5</sup>”. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 2005 October 12.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Sept05/NSFcybertools.dea.html>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.newfuelnow.com/commentary/august2005/shedlock0805.htm>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.newfuelnow.com/>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.literateprogramming.com/>

<sup>5</sup>[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/transportation/244174\\_intro.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/transportation/244174_intro.html)

2. Daniel C Dennett. “Show Me the Science<sup>6</sup>”. 2005 August 25. It’s about intelligent design. It’s an excellent article.

## 10.5 Thursday, October 13

1. National Priorities Project. “On Budget, Off Budget Federal Spending<sup>7</sup>”.
2. National Priorities Project. <http://www.nationalpriorities.org/>
3. GPO Access. “Citizen’s Guide to the Federal Budget: Fiscal Year 2001”. 2004 March 30.

## 10.6 Friday, October 14

1. “Pentagon Denies Talk With Troops Was Staged<sup>8</sup>”. 2005 October 14.
2. “Bush’s Conversation With U.S. Soldiers Was Rehearsed<sup>9</sup>”. 2005 October 14.
3. “Republicans’ Texas Spending May Bolster Charges Against DeLay<sup>10</sup>”. 2005 October 14.

## 10.7 Wednesday, October 19

1. Mike Musgrove. Printers output secret barcode. The Washington Post. 2005 October 19. [157]  
Big brother or a convenient time-stamp? Would people be as worried if the code were public & not a dirty secret? Why do governments feel the need to keep this kind of thing secret?
2. Johann Galtung. <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=johann+galtung>

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<sup>6</sup>[http://www.edge.org/3rd\\_culture/dennett05/dennett05\\_index.html](http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/dennett05/dennett05_index.html)

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.nationalpriorities.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=73&Itemid=110](http://www.nationalpriorities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=73&Itemid=110)

<sup>8</sup><http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,172262,00.html>

<sup>9</sup><http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1511492/20051014/index.jhtml?headlines=true>

<sup>10</sup><http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000103&sid=acqTIqpGJWG0&refer=us>

# Chapter 11

## 2005 November

### 11.1 Sunday, November 13

1. *Belladonna at Belstone*, a murder mystery by Michael Jecks, set in a convent in the middle ages.

### 11.2 Sunday, November 20

1. “Occult Mystery on Iona – The Strange Death of Netta Fornario”, by Brian A. Haughton. Mysterious People web site<sup>1</sup>.
2. “Eleonore Zugun – Poltergeist Girl”, by Brian A. Haughton. Mysterious People web site<sup>2</sup>.

Reminds me a little of the movie *Phenomena*<sup>3</sup> (1985), directed by Dario Argento.

It mostly sounds like people saw what they claim they saw, especially with the Countess keeping a diary of the girl’s poltergeist events, but without details, you can’t help but imagine the girl throwing tantrums by throwing household objects.

3. *The Mystery of Patience Worth*<sup>4</sup>, by Troy Talor. 2002.
4. *Rare’s Perfect Gamble*<sup>5</sup>. Colin Campbell. 2005 November 17.
5. Text on Internet governance watered down<sup>6</sup>. 2005 November 15.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.mysteriouspeople.com/Occult\\_mystery.htm](http://www.mysteriouspeople.com/Occult_mystery.htm)

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.mysteriouspeople.com/Eleonore\\_Zugun.htm](http://www.mysteriouspeople.com/Eleonore_Zugun.htm)

<sup>3</sup><http://us.imdb.com/title/tt0087909/combined>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.prairieghosts.com/pearl.html>

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.next-gen.biz/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1662&Itemid=2](http://www.next-gen.biz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1662&Itemid=2)

<sup>6</sup>[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1105AP\\_Info\\_Summit.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1105AP_Info_Summit.html)

6. ???<sup>7</sup>
7. Massachusetts leads revolt against Microsoft<sup>8</sup>. 2005 November 4.  
Good for Massachusetts, though I can't help but wonder if plain HTML or L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X would have worked for them. Both satisfy Microsoft's suggestion that the document format be "tested".
8. Intel, Microsoft take sides on next-gen DVDs<sup>9</sup>. 2005 September 27.
9. Investigators closing in on identity of frozen WW2 airman<sup>10</sup>. By Thelma Gutierrez. 2005 November 3.
10. How to write a Windows NT service<sup>11</sup>. By jarmo Muukka. 2002 February 7.

### 11.3 Sunday, 2005 November 27

If you need a regular expression library for Common Lisp, I recommend Dorai Sitaram's "pregexp: Portable Regular Expressions for Scheme and Common Lisp" [199]

Some of the things I really liked about Sitaram's regular expression library include, from most important to least:

1. It has a simple API.
2. It's portable. I had no trouble using it on SBCL or clisp.
3. It has nice documentation.
4. It has a simple installation. Just download one file, then load that file into your Lisp.
5. It works.

### 11.4 Monday, November 28

1. "Fox Partakes in Using False Information to Exonerate Lewis Libby<sup>12</sup>". At News Hounds<sup>13</sup>. 2005 November 17.
2. "CIA leak scandal should prod reporters to clarify sleuthing<sup>14</sup>". By Jerry Ceppos. 2005 November 28.

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<sup>7</sup>[http://www.wired.com/news/technology/bugs/0,2924,69375,00.html?tw=wn\\_tophead\\_3](http://www.wired.com/news/technology/bugs/0,2924,69375,00.html?tw=wn_tophead_3)

<sup>8</sup><http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9925885/>

<sup>9</sup><http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9501255/>

<sup>10</sup><http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/11/01/frozen.airman.investigation/>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.muukka.net/programming/service.html>

<sup>12</sup>[http://www.newshounds.us/2005/11/17/fox\\_partakes\\_in\\_using\\_false\\_information\\_to\\_exonerate\\_lewis\\_libby.php](http://www.newshounds.us/2005/11/17/fox_partakes_in_using_false_information_to_exonerate_lewis_libby.php)

<sup>13</sup><http://www.newshounds.us/>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/opinion/13271871.htm>

## 11.5 Wednesday, November 30

1. "Soapbox: ARGs and How to Appeal to Female Gamers". By Andrea Phillips at Gamasutra. 2005 November 29.
2. "GameStop Records Loss, Concerns Over Xbox 360 Supply" at Gamasutra. 2005 November 29.



# Chapter 12

## 2005 December

### 12.1 Thursday, December 1

1. “Brad McQuaid on Instancing”. By *on* at GamderGod.com. 2005 November 29. local copy in plain HTML.
2. “Raph Koster on Instancing”. By *on* at Gamergod.com. 2005 November 30. local copy in plain HTML.
3. “Scott Jennings on Instancing”. By *on* at GamerGod.com. 2005 November 30. local copy in plain HTML.

### 12.2 Tuesday, December 6

1. “What is UMD”. By David James Rockingham III. At Digital Game Developer. 2005 April 21.

### 12.3 Wednesday, December 7

#### 12.3.1 United States bullshit

The United Nations’s High Commissioner for Human Rights said that the U.S.–led war on terror has undermined the global ban on torture, weakening American moral authority on human rights worldwide.

In reply, a U.S. Ambassador, John Bolton, said it was “illegitimate for a public servant” to second-guess the CIA’s actions in the “war on terror” based on what she read in the newspaper.

1. Illegitimate? Why? Shouldn’t a public servant mention issues that affect the public? Shouldn’t an employee of the United Nations mention issues that affect the world? Shouldn’t *anyone* call a tyrant a tyrant when they see it?

2. Second-guess? Second-guessing has to do with predicting what someone will do or with discussing what *could have* been done if things had been different. Doesn't sound like she was second-guessing. She was commenting on what an issue that really is affecting the world today.
3. The U.S. government & the CIA are, well, a government & a government agency. They deserve to be inspected & questioned in public because they exist to serve. If they violate human rights, the fact should be revealed, & they deserve to be held accountable for it.

Mister John Bolton was just doing what politicians in the U.S. government do these days: Spewing nonsense to sew Fear, Uncertainty, & Doubt (FUD) with no reason at all to back it up.

Too bad the tactic is so effective.

I hate what my government has become.

1. "UN calls torture ban a casualty of war on terror". By Daniel Trotta. Reuters. 2005 December 7.

## 12.4 Friday, December 9

1. "Resource-limited genetic programming: the dynamic approach", by Sara Silva and Ernesto Costa. [197]

### 12.4.1 What Are the Current Research Topics in Computer Science?

Out of curiosity, I went to ACM's digital library & did some searches learn what topics in computer science are current, open, urgent, & basically hot. Was computer vision & natural language processing were still on the list? Was progress in robotics was eminent? What were researchers researching in earnest?

My interpretation of what I saw is that the current, hot, unresolved, urgent topic of research in computer science is... how to teach computer science. Seriously.

I guess that's why so many essays & letters in *Communications of the ACM* have been about education in the past few years.

## 12.5 Monday, December 12

1. "Unstructured, But Not Really". By Charlene O'Hanlon. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [163]
2. "Kode Vicious Unscripted". By Kode Vicious. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [274]

3. “Managing Semi-Structured Data”. By Daniela Florescue. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [72]
4. “Learning from the Web”. By Adam Bosworth. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [37]  
All the essays in the 2005 October issue of *Queue* were good, but Bosworth’s & Suver’s were the best.
5. “XML & Semi-Structured Data”. By C.M. Sperger-McQueen. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [201]
6. “Order from Chaos”. By Natalya Noy. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [159]
7. “Why Your Data Won’t Mix”. By Alon Halevy. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [86]
8. “The Cost of Data”. By Chris Suver. ACM Queue. 2005 October. [259]

## 12.6 Tuesday, December 13

1. MEP looks forward to Iraq observer mission. By Arnab Neil Sengupta. Aljazeera.net. [189]
2. “Out in the cold: Montreal global warming conference shows U.S. is part of the problem but not part of the solution”. Houston Chronicle. 2005 December 12. [232]

## 12.7 Wednesday, December 14

1. “A Sea of Holes”. By Alexandra Weber Morales. Software Development. 2005 August. [155]
2. “Reinventing the Smart Phone”. By Rosalyn Lum. Software Development. 2005 August. [138]
3. “Visions of VoIP”. By John Ravello, Joe Falcone, and Gareth Meyrick. [178]
4. “A Spare Start”. By Scott W. Ambler. [6]
5. “When Enough’s Enough”. By Robert C. Martin. [143]
6. “Breaking Down the Barriers”. By Steve Adolph and Fariba Matin. [4]
7. “Declien and Fall”. By Warren Keuffel. [107]
8. “Israeli airstrike kills four Palestinians”. Aljazeera.net. [224]
9. “Israeli airstrike kills 4 Palestinians in Gaza”. At Baltimore Sun. [223]

start year	death toll	event or cause
1347	$59.0 \times 10^6$	Black Death, Europe & China
1939	$57.0 \times 10^6$	World War 2, total, not just battles)
1918	$40.0 \times 10^6$	Spanish flu, high estimate
1347	$34.0 \times 10^6$	Black Death, Europe
1347	$25.0 \times 10^6$	Black Death, China
1918	$20.0 \times 10^6$	Spanish flu, low estimate
1914	$15.0 \times 10^6$	World War 1, total, not just battles
1964	$2.5 \times 10^6$	Vietnam War
1861	$600.0 \times 10^3$	United States's Civil War

Table 12.1: Some death tolls, including the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic

### 12.7.1 Flu or Plague?

On a radio talk show this morning, an expert said that the 1918-1919 flu pandemic killed more people than any other single epidemic or pandemic.

I wondered if it could have killed more than any of the plague pandemics in the middle ages, & how the death toll of the 1918 flue pandemic compared to that of say, automobile accidents or AIDS in the modern world.

According to “Black Death<sup>1</sup>” on Wikipedia, that plague killed  $34 \times 10^6$  people in Europe from 1347 to 1350. It also killed people in Asia & the Middle East at the same time, so the total death count was more than  $34 \times 10^6$  people. The population data about China is rough, but the same Wikipedia essay estimates that it was about  $25 \times 10^6$  people. The data about the Middle East is even less dependable, giving no totals & simply relating that contemporary reports claimed as many as  $10^3$  deaths per day.

The 1918 flu pandemic is also called the 1918 Spanish flue pandemic. According to “The Influenza Pandemic of 1918<sup>2</sup>”, a web page at Stanford University, the 1918-1919 Spanish flu pandemic killed at least  $20 \times 10^6$  & at most  $40 \times 10^6$  people.

Table 12.1 shows those death tolls & other death tolls.

All of the death tolls for wars are from a web page<sup>3</sup>.

I conclude that, though the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic killed more people than did the Black Death in Europe, it killed fewer people than did the Black Death when Europe & China are considered, & so far fewer people than did the Black Death when the entire world is considered which it must be if you consider the entire world when you calculate the total deaths for the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic.

So the expert was wrong.

<sup>1</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Death)

<sup>2</sup><http://www.stanford.edu/group/virus/uda/>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.geocities.com/dtmcbride/hist/wars.html>

## 12.8 Friday, December 16

1. “Senate rebuffs Bush on Patriot Act”. By Declan McCullagh.
2. “Bush eased domestic spy limits after 9/11: report”. By David Morgan. [156]
3. “Q&A: US domestic spying row”. At BBC News. [235]
4. “Update 12: Report of NSA Spying Prompts Call for Probe”. At Forbes.
5. “Report: Bush authorized NSA to spy on Americans”. At Sign On San Diego. [3]
6. “Rice denies illegal spying”. At News24.com.
7. “Bush Secretly Lifted Some Limits on Spying in U.S. After 9/11, Officials Say”. By Eric Lichtblau. At New York Times. 2005 December 15.

## 12.9 Saturday, December 17

1. “The United States is not like the terrorists”. At Mail & Guardian Online. 2005 December 16. [245]
2. “Bush’s domestic spy plan assailed. By Katherine Shrader. At Denver-Post.com. 2005 December 17. [195]

## 12.10 Sunday, December 18

1. “The plot to deskill software engineering”. By Robert L. Glass. 2005 November. [79]
2. “It’s time to think outside the computational box”. By Peter Kugel. 2005 November. [116]  
This is one of the best articles I’ve read in CACM in months, maybe in a couple of years.
3. “Call for a public-domain SpeechWeb”. By Richard A. Frost. [73]
4. “Detection and prevention of stack buffer overflow attacks”. By Benjamin A. Kuperman and Carla E. Brodley and Hilmi Ozdoganoglu and T. N. Vijaykumar and Ankit Jalote. 2005 November. [117]
5. “Rule of law and the international diffusion of e-commerce”. By Chuan-Fong Shih and Jason Dedrick and Kenneth L. Kraemer. 2005 November [194]
6. “Business email: the killer impact”. By Rana Tassabehji and Maria Vakola. 2005 November. [265]

7. “Maintaining enterprise software applications”. By Radha Mookerjee. 2005 November. [151]
8. “The real national-security needs for VoIP”. By Steven M. Bellovin and Matt Blaze and Susan Landau. 2005 November. [25]

### 12.10.1 Slimy Spooks

1. “Senator Says Bush is Acting Like King George”. At ABC News. 2005 December 18. [241]
 

Partially explains why Bush’s authorization of un-warranted<sup>4</sup> surveillance is not automatically a blatantly illegal act.

Sounds like Senator Feingold isn’t afraid to speak sense now, & he was the only(?) Senator to oppose the PATRIOT act. And he might run for President in 2008.
2. “Eavesdropping will not stop, says Bush”. By Michael Gawenda. 2005 December 19. [77]
3. “Bush defends secret spying in the US”. By Jennifer Loven. 2005 December 18. [137]
4. “Threads cannot be implemented as a library”. By Hans-J. Boehm. 2005 ACM SIGPLAN conference. [36]
5. “Pernicious Ports”. By Hal Berghel and David Hoelzer. 2005 December. [28]
6. “The Semantic E-Business Vision”. By Rahul Singh and Lakshmi S. Iyer and A.F. Salam. Commun. ACM. 2005 December. [198]
7. “Using the Web Service Modeling Ontology to Enable Semantic E-Business”. By Jos de Bruijn, Dieter Fensel, Uwe Keller, and Rubén Lara. Commun. ACM. 2005 December. [56]
8. “Separate Handles from Names on the Internet”. By Michael J. O’Donnell. Commun. ACM. 2005 December. [161]
 

Very cool.
9. “Does Avatar Email Improve Communication”. By Younghwa Lee, Kenneth A. Kozar, and Kai R. Larsen. Commun. ACM. 2005 December. [?]
10. “Wikipedia Risks”. By Peter Denning, Jin Horning, David Parnas, and Lauren Weinstein. Commun. ACM. 2005 December. [58]

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<sup>4</sup>The surveillance was conducted without warrants. So it was *un*-warranted.

11. “The design of TeX and METAFONT: A retrospective”. By Nelson H. F. Beebe. [24]  
All that history about the PDP-10 was fascinating. Rest of the essay is good, too.
12. “A L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X fledgling struggles to take flight”. By Peter L. Flom. [71]  
Cute. A fun read. I probably learned form it, too.
13. “The art of L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X problem solving”. Anitz Z. Schwartz. [186]
14. “Strategies for including graphics in L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X documents”. By Klaus Höppner. [93]
15. “Bush authorized spying on dozens of occasions”. At Taipei Times. 2005 December 18. [205]
16. “W: We spied on Americans”. By Paul H.B. Shin. 2005 December 18.

## 12.11 Tuesday, December 20

### 12.11.1 Good news

w00t!

1. “Intelligent design unconstitutional”. At The Australian. 2005 December 20. [221]
2. “Judge Rules in Evolution Case”. At WVLT Volunteer. 2005 December 20. [225]
3. “Banned in biology class: intelligent design”. By Peter Grier. 2005 December 20. [83]
4. “Judge Rules Against Pa. Biology Curriculum”. By Martha Raffaele. 2005 December 20. [175]

## 12.12 Thursday, December 22

1. “Saddam accuses White House of lying”. At Aljazeera.net. 2005 December 22. [240]
2. “An Unlikely Pioneer”. By Jimmy Langman and Joseph Contreras. 2005 December 22. [120]
3. Minnesota Daily’s visually interesting & cool web site: <http://www.mndaily.com/finals/2005fall/index.php>

## 12.13 Friday, December 23

### 12.13.1 White House is out of control

1. “Defending Spy Program, Administration Cites Law”. David Johnston and Neil A. Lewis. 2005 December 23. [101]

2. “Daschle says Bush denied U.S. war powers”. At Science Daily. 2005 December 23. [212]

Very interesting: A senator claims that the senate debated giving the president power to “make war in the US” when they originally discussed the “P.A.T.R.I.O.T.” act, & they explicitly decided not to put that power in said act. If true, this probably nullifies Bush’s argument that said act implicitly gave him said power.

3. “Congress never gave power to spy”. By Barton Gellman. 2005 December 23. [78]

4. “Bush’s use of executive power”. By Daniel Schorr. 2005 December 23. [185]

The comparison to President Nixon is interesting. Here is that comparison: “In his defiance, there may be peril for the president, as President Nixon discovered when the House Judiciary Committee voted three articles of impeachment against him, one of them for abusing the power of three agencies – the FBI, CIA, and IRS. Nixon took the position that he was using inherent presidential powers granted by the Constitution.”

That sure sounds like our President Bush.

Is Schorr correct that Congress’s only weapons against a president out of control are impeachment & refusal to fund his actions? I thought our government has three branches to serve as “checks & balances” against each other, but it sounds like there isn’t much anyone can do to rein-in an out-of-control branch, especially if it’s the executive branch.

5. “Congress right to demand explanation from president”. By Zoe Lofgren. 2005 December 23. [135]

Another comparison to Nixon: “As a young congressional staffer, I looked on when President Nixon asserted similar claims about the inherent authority of the president. In 1972, the Supreme Court unanimously said ‘no’ to Nixon’s sweeping claim of presidential power. In 1978, Congress passed the FISA law to make sure that surveillance activities were overseen by the courts, carried out within the law, so that abuses would not be committed again. Is the president really asserting that the laws passed by Congress or the constitutional rulings of the Supreme Court don’t apply to him?” Also, she asks if “checks & balances” still work.

## 12.14 Saturday, December 24

1. “Windows, Office land on web”. By Peter Galli. 2005 November 7. [74]

## 12.15 Sunday, December 25

1. “Leaky Leahy leads push for spy probe”. By Carl Limbacher. [129]

Carl Limbacher is confused. He thinks that Leahy’s leaks of intelligence information are equivalent to Bush’s questionably legal surveillance for the past few years. They are unrelated.

Leahy talked about intelligence issues he shouldn’t have.

Bush by-passed the FISA court & personally authorized un-warranted surveillance. The FISA court was created in 1978 to allow presidents to do exactly this kind of secret, at-a-moment’s-notice surveillance legally, with the approval of the courts, but Bush ignored the courts & made the decision on his own. He has admitted exactly this.

Bush says that the implicit powers of the presidency allowed him to do it. I say he broke the law.

2. “Bush spy tactics disturbing”. By Chad Swiatecki. [261]
3. “DNC: Hearings needed on Bush spy program”. At U.S. Newswire. [214]
4. “A Design That’s Anti-Faith”. By Eugene Robinson. [180]  
Excellent summary of the situation.

## 12.16 Monday, December 26

1. “Analysis: Bush ties surveillance to 9/11 law”. By Toni Loci. [134]
2. “Secrets and Lies: Seventy-five little reasons to be terrified of the FISA”. By Dahlia Lithwick. 2002 August 29. [132]
3. “Bush’s Enemies List. Why Did Bush Commit an Illegal, Impeachable Act When All His Lawyers Had to Do Was Walk Into a Secret Court?”. At Buzzflash.com. 2005 December 20. [208]
4. “I’m allowed to spy: Bush”. By Geoff Elliott. 2005 December 21. [67]
5. “Analysis: Courts have set limits on presidential power”. By Michael McGough. 2005 December 22. [148]
6. “The New Madness of King George”. By Robert Perry. 2005 December 19. [170]

Perry’s article is a well-written summary of the whole Bush presidential situation. It concludes with a frightening observation.

7. “Surveillance without a warrant not legal, poll majority says”. At Statesman Journal. 2005 December 21. [242]
8. “License to spy”. By Aziz Huq. 2005 December 19. [95]
9. “Experts say wiretap fight may taint cases”. By Ted Bridis. 2005 December 21. [40]

## 12.17 Tuesday, December 27

1. “Social bookmarking in the enterprise”. By David Millen and Jonathan Feinberg and Bernard Kerr. ACM Queue. [150]
2. “Threads without the pain”. By Andreas Gustafsson. ACM Queue. [84]  
 I really liked this essay. It’s one of those things that makes me think “I wish I had written it”. For years, I’ve griped to friends & coworkers that preemptive threads suck (**and** they are criminally mis-used), event loops are better, & cooperative threads are debatably best. Gustafsson makes a better case for it than I ever did.  
 I’m afraid that abuse & over-use of preemptive threads will continue for years to come, but there’s hope.
3. “Information extraction: distilling structured data from unstructured text”. By Andrew McCallum. ACM Queue. [147]
4. “Stop whining about outsourcing!”. By David Patterson. ACM Queue. [167]  
 Just because it was inevitable, necessary, & fair, doesn’t mean it didn’t hurt a lot of people. One of the things that was so frustrating was that it was all those things, & there was nothing you could do about it.  
 Anyone who still gripes about outsourcing is spewing their bile in the wrong direction. Outsourcing isn’t the problem. It *was* a symptom.

## 12.18 December 28

1. “Criminals target viruses for cash”. By Mark Ward. [275]
2. “New Wire Tap Revelations: Why Did Rice and Bush Spy on UN Diplomats?”. By Deborah White. [279]  
 Condoleeza Rice was the NSA Security Advisor when Bush’s spying program began? She authorized the program at Bush’s request? Oh boy.
3. “Viewpoint: Bush spy program has renewed impeachment calls”. By Joe Baker. [17]
4. “Impeachment is now real”. By Martin Garbus. [75]
5. “The I-Word is Gaining Ground”. By Katrina Vanden Heuvel. [91]

## 12.19 Thursday, December 29

1. “Bush Spy Scandal Jeopardizes National Security”. By Dave Lindorff. [130]
2. “Bush-NSA Spying in Defiance of Congress, Court”. By Jason Leopold. [127]

Here’s the first paragraph from that editorial:

The Bush administration was publicly admonished by a senate committee, and a special surveillance court, in two separate instances for repeatedly trying to skirt the law in obtaining top-secret warrants to spy on American citizens suspected of having ties to terrorists. Despite the public rebuke, President Bush circumvented the judicial process and secretly authorized the National Security Agency to spy on thousands of individuals in the United States in defiance of the very court that issued a legal opinion saying the administration was already infringing on civil liberties in other domestic spy cases.

If we Americans don’t wake up & hold our government responsible for what it does, we won’t be the America we think we are. I wouldn’t be surprised if that’s already happened.

## 12.20 Friday, December 30

### 12.20.1 White House is out of control

1. “Hillary Clinton Blasts Bush ’Spy’ Program”. At NewsMax.com. [219]  
This article says that “the New York Times erroneously claimed that NSA surveillance of American citizens began under the Bush administration”. Unless the intent is to point out that said surveillance has been happening since before 2001 September (& god help us if it has), it’s wrong. Bush himself said that he authorized the surveillance no less than 30 times & he intends to continue doing it.
2. “Bush spy scandal causes ruling-class rift”. By Fred Goldstein. 2005 December 22. [81]
3. “George W. Bush as the new Richard M. Nixon: Both wiretapped illegally & impeachably”. At War Without End. [5]
4. “FISA court approved Bush spy program”. At NewsMax.com. 2005 December 20. [216]

If the OpinionJournal.com quoted the FISA court correctly, that court’s opinion applies to “foreign intelligence”, which does not obviously include

surveillance of American citizens. In fact, the NSA has always had the authority to spy on foreigners in foreign countries, but it has never had the authority to spy on American citizens in America, warrant or not. The current hoopla about Bush's Nixonesque spying is about un-warranted surveillance conducted by the NSA with President Bush's approval, on American citizens in America.

5. "Bush addresses P.A.T.R.I.O.T. act, NSA spying". By Liza Porteus. 2005 December 19. [?]
6. "Justice Department Investigating Leak of Domestic Wiretapping". At Muslim American Society. [226]  
They're investigating the whistleblower. Woopie. I hope they won't forget to investigate the surveillance itself.

Bush claims that the un-warranted surveillance was legal due to the P.A.T.R.I.O.T. act & the authorizations to use force on Afganistan & Iraq. So a few plain old laws trump the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution? If so, we need to pass a law that says "No they don't", & then we need to take Congress out behind the barn & shoot it because it was negligent in passing such laws.

But I can't imagine how a few plain old laws could possibly trump an Amendment to the Constitution. If they did, then every law Congress passed would need to have a clause that said "This bill does not supercede any Amendment to the Constitution nor any other article in the Constitution". If the highest law in the land needed explicit claims of subservience from all other laws, then it wouldn't be the highest law in the land. So the highest law in the land must trump other laws by default. So the P.A.T.R.I.O.T. act & the authorizations to use force on Afganistan & Iraq do not grant the president the power to ignore the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution.

### 12.20.2 YAWSH

**YAWSH:** Yet Another Windows Security Hole

1. "Exploit released for unpatched Windows flaw". By Brian Krebs. [114]
2. "Windows security flaw is severe". By Brian Krebs. [115]

Summary of the bug: It exploits some kind of hole in how Windows Meta Files (WMF) are parsed or interpreted.

A WMF file is intended to hold graphical commands, like what to paint where on a screen. By using the `PLAYMETAFILE` Windows sytem call in C, you can make the graphics system execute all the graphics system calls that you saved into the meta file. This feature has been around a long time, like since Windows 3.1 or before.

It sounds like either WMF files have an inherent security flaw (like executing arbitrary programs), or there's some kind of implementation flaw (like a buffer over-run) which allows them to execute arbitrary programs.

According to [114], as of about noon today, thousands of web sites are now exploiting the flaw.

Makes me glad I don't run Microsloth Winders at home. We're safe here, me & my three-flavors-of-BSD.

## 12.21 Saturday, December 31

1. "Congress blasts Bush's surveillance of U.S. calls, e-mails". By Ron Hutcherson. 2005 December 17. [96]
2. "ACLU calls for special counsel: Add your voice".
3. "NSA spying on Americans is illegal". At the ACLU's web site [230]

The ultimate paragraph in this essay is frightening, though it reassures me that I'm not the only person who believes this is a big issue. (I'm also afraid that the people, & therefore Congress, will ignore it.) Here is that last paragraph: "egardless of the scale of this spying, we are facing a historic moment: the President of the United States has claimed a sweeping wartime power to brush aside the clear limits on his power set by our Constitution and laws - a chilling assertion of presidential power that has not been seen since Richard Nixon."

4. "The government is spying on us". At ACLU. [218]
5. "Impeach Bush? Why bother?". By Deborah Leavy. 2005 December 30. [122]

Would be hilarious if it weren't so depressing.



## Appendix A

# Confessions of a UO Gold Farmer

Here is a copy of “Confessions of a UO Gold Farmer” from which I have removed the formatting which made the article unreadable, at least to people like me with bad eye-sight. The original appears at <http://www.markeedragon.com/u/ubbthreads/showflat.php?Board=uonews&...>

### A.1 The Reformatted Article

#29818 - 01/21/05 08:34 AM

In May of 2004 we worked with an exploiter to stop a very damaging exploit in the game. The reason we got involved was at the exploiters request because his competition had just found out how to also do the exploit and he did not want them to benefit from it. You could say it's exploiter conflicts. lol

Today I got a message from the unnamed exploiter telling me a lot of information that was not known. According to him he has moved on to other things and wants to tell all about his exploits. It's an interesting read and gives you a look into these exploitations and how they are very much like a normal business.

These exploits no longer work. So don't be a dork and try them. If you do it may throw some red flags and get you into some hot water. :)

The following is from the exploiter. It is unedited and is exactly as I received it.

#### A.1.1 So Long! And thanks for all the birds!

Confessions of a UO Gold Farmer

You all have seen my Picture:

I am a programmer by trade, and a tinker by hobby. I love things like automation and scripting. I have loved the Ultima series and was playing UO the day it hit the street. However, life does catch up and I quit UO as a player

in August of 1999. However, wasn't until December 2001 that UO would come back into my life. I received an email from EA telling me how UO had changed so much<sup>1</sup>, and I was honestly curious. But, the pangs of defeat were still in my gut. You see, when I quit UO I had lots of stuff, all of which I gave away to newbie's on their first day. A Castle, many houses, gold, goods, and loot, all given away freely. A close friend quit UO like I did, but he had the bright idea of hocking his account online on Ebay and got like \$1000 for his account. I was disappointed because I knew I have a MUCH better account than he did. Don't we all? Given all that, I decided that if I was going to get sucked back into the UO worlds, I was going to have a goal. My goal was to make back all the money I had played in the pervious years of playing UO and then I would quit.

So there I was, I had the game and a goal, but I lacked a plan. Thank goodness for my education! College seemed to pay off, or maybe I just broke even. Anyway, I started researching<sup>2</sup> what people where buying and selling. I spent about 40 days gathering data and when all was said and done, I discovered that UO had a 4.3 Million dollar Ebay Market. There was definitely a piece of pie to be had, and gold was the hot item.

Plan in hand, I started looking at game play with a new passion I never seemed to have in the years of play prior to this. I quickly realized that one player on his own really could not be a producer. Later I did find that a single player could make a decent profit, but the work involved was definitely labor intensive. You can read more about that on Julian's web site. Anyway, UO is just a client/server computer program. Programs like these require user input, but that can be scripted or programmatically controlled. And, this is something I knew a thing or two about.

What about the EULA and ROC? Well, the EULA stats that no 3rd party applications are allowed, but we all know and use many different utilities out there. So, since I agreed to the EULA, I am the first party, being the paying member for UO and EA is the second party, being the provider. So, if \*I\* make/author a utility, it is a 1st party utility, and in my opinion, anything you make doesn't apply. Over simplification maybe, but I can sleep at night on those terms. Now, the rules of conduct are a different story. The ROC say something like, thou shall not macro unattended. The litmus test for this rule is a GM asking you to respond, and if the GM is satisfied, you are golden. I concentrated on resolving this first problem and I believe it was a pretty creative solution.

Instant messaging has been a great blessing and is used by millions of people everyday for instant communication. When a GM talks to you in the game, or anyone for that matter, UO becomes one massive IM application. So, why not wire UO up to something akin to Trillian and pipe any in-game text to an IM application of your choice? This is exactly what I did. Since I was able to get game text from the game client, I piped it to MSN messenger and was able to converse with GMs or anyone else in the game from my smart phone that was MSN messenger aware. So, as long as you are able to respond right? I felt that

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<sup>1</sup><http://noctalis.com/dis/uo/pr0110.shtml>

<sup>2</sup>[http://video-games.listings.ebay.com/Internet-Games\\_Ultima-Online\\_W0QQfromZR4QQsacategoryZ33886QQsocmdZListingItemList](http://video-games.listings.ebay.com/Internet-Games_Ultima-Online_W0QQfromZR4QQsacategoryZ33886QQsocmdZListingItemList)

I had satisfied the ROC. Game on!

In the end, however, it wasn't GM intervention that was the challenge. It was interactions with the less than desirable persons that also farmed gold. Interaction with people like Lee Cadwell, aka Black Snow Interactive<sup>3</sup>, was like being in an old west town where you were asked to leave by sun down. "This game aint big enough for the two of us...DRAW!" is a quote that comes to mind. You can read some of the ICQ logs here<sup>4</sup>. There were even people that made bots that hunted bots. The motto was, if I can't compete, I'll just make it so no one can.

There were also others like IngotDude<sup>5</sup> that would stoop to the use of dupe bugs instead of focusing on "allowed" game play mechanics. We all know what happen to him in the end<sup>6</sup>. Actually, it was because of him that I first came into public light. A picture of my operation that I showed a select few was circulated and assumed was his setup was posted on Stratics.com. I was consumed by pride and had to explain that it was \*my\* setup depicted and not Ingotdude's or BSI's setup.

Between the pressures of my competition, the required maintenance work and the impending doom of on-line game markets, I decided to retire my bot farm in favor of other possibilities that required less work to maintain. Last May I sold off the last of my game assets and today I have posted my bot army for sale on Ebay. I don't want to part with these beasts of burden, but I do have to close this final chapter in the gold farming adventure. They are trusty little machines, and will do everything you ask of them, provided you know how to ask. Or, if you know someone that needs a computer, you can hook them up with one of these. Who knows, they might even want to play UO. And just to be clear, I am selling just the computers.

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He appears to have ebay auctions up selling the computers that were used to farm all of this gold. If you are interested to see them closer you can do so here<sup>7</sup>. I did a little further looking and it looks like several people bought gold from him on ebay according to his feedback<sup>8</sup>.

I have to say that I'm glad he's out of the business now. Since we exposed this big exploit in the game we have had a good long run of no issues like this that I have been aware of. That's a very good thing. Kudos to the UO dev team.

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.unknownplayer.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=1517>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.unknownplayer.com/images/blacksnow2/icqlog2003.html>

<sup>5</sup><http://uodudes.com/>

<sup>6</sup><http://feedback.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewFeedback&userid=ingotdude&items=-1&item=-1&de=off>

<sup>7</sup>[http://search.ebay.com/\\_W0QQsofindtypeZ15QQuseridZmechenizedQQfcI3QQ&amp;Q3BsspagementnameZhQ3AhQ3AadvsearchQ3AUSC](http://search.ebay.com/_W0QQsofindtypeZ15QQuseridZmechenizedQQfcI3QQ&amp;Q3BsspagementnameZhQ3AhQ3AadvsearchQ3AUSC)

<sup>8</sup><http://feedback.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewFeedback&userid=mechenized>



## Appendix B

# Other File Formats

- This document is available in multi-file HTML format at <http://cybertiggyr.com/gene/tae2005/>.
- This document is available in Pointless Document Format (PDF) at <http://cybertiggyr.com/gene/tae2005/tae2005.pdf>.



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