The Matrix

- Join the Matrix

Join the Matrix

What is the Matrix

In my opinion, The Matrix films provide the best metaphor our society has for understanding why organized evil and oppression are allowed to exist, and so I will use it for this purpose. While my interpretation isn't the only possible one, I believe it to be valid, comprehensive, and most importantly, illustrative of the message I am trying to convey.

So let's begin by discussing what the Matrix is not. The Matrix is not the physical world. As far as I'm concerned, the physical world is actually real and is in fact governed ceaselessly by the laws of physics. Conversely, the Matrix is also not the Internet, despite what many seem to believe. The Matrix spans and transcends both these worlds. It has existed since the dawn of civilization, and it will continue to exist until its collapse.

So then, what is it? Well, that's complicated. Much like in the movie, it's nearly impossible to convey the size and scope of the Matrix to someone who doesn't already see it for what it is. However, unlike the movie, I believe it is an ethical imperative to try to convey it in a literal sense, even to those who are so dependent upon the Matrix that they would fight to protect it. At worst, they won't understand or believe and will continue on about their business. In a sense, I believe Cypher was right to resent Morpheus for what he did, because Morpheus is the social structure that subordinates Humanity to its will. It is the machinery of society that exists solely to perpetuate itself, its influence, and its power independent of any human need. It insulates us from each other and ourselves through deception, and essentially transforms us into servile engines of economic and political output (power). The machines that live off this power are institutions: lv/1c1e5 large corporations, governments, schools, religious institutions, and even non-profit orgs. Every institution will reach a point in its existence where its primary function becomes self-preservation and perpetuation, instead of serving human need. At this point it becomes a machine of the Matrix. For example, when they become machines, governments cease to serve people and instead seek to extend their power over them; corporations prioritize increasing shareholder value over producing quality products or otherwise serving the public good; schools view students as a means and not an end; religious organizations equate membership with salvation (and actively oppose other teachings and even independent practice); and non-profits and charities spend more budget on fund raising activity than on their original focus. Inevitably all large institutions eventually become machines. They become too big for Humanity.

In addition to the independent self-perpetuating machines that write most of our paychecks, the Matrix has several major cooperative and more actively sinister groups of machines subsisting off of its power and directly contributing to the structure of the Matrix itself. These groups are the Military Industrial Complex, the Political Industrial Complex, the Prison Industrial Complex, the

Surveillance Industrial Complex, the Media Industrial Complex, the Academic Industrial Complex, the Agricultural Industrial Complex, the Medical Industrial Complex and the major religious organizations (not to be confused with actual religions, many religious organizatons have abandoned the underlying principles of the religions they claim to represent). All machines in these groups either actively oppress humanity, or enable the oppression to persist. It is through their combined efforts that the Matrix takes on some of its more distasteful qualities.

Do you ever wonder If Aristotle and Plato dedicated their lives to something they don't really believe or tested? They had a school, a philosopher school. 2300 years ago and still today we have to learn it at the University's. But why? If the things they said back then where just thought forms without a deeper truth or meaning why do we need to go so far back?

How many opinions are there? Why are the opinions of them so important that was my question.

If you then take Karl Marx his book 'das capital', and you see his vision completely clashes with the visions of the ancient philosophers, not just little differences in opinion but a way of thinking I call it a form of dehumanization, all in the name of capital. Without shame.

I wonder how this can be. Because truth can be found in Ancient Philosophy, I believe in the laws concerning property en wealth that Aristotle pointed out very strictly in his works. Why? Because the people he worked with were on to something. You don't do the things they did if it's all without meaning. With the invention of money those laws could be altered because the economy was since then not a trade of goods but an economy based on money. Carl Marx was the front-man of a shift. Money going to the digital age. Therefore maybe we should take Marx and add IT with the theory to make it up to date. Marx-IT or Matrix.

He comes with the claim that a worker should earn just enough to stay healthy, so that he can produce each day the same. In other words, the only reason we give you money is to stay working for us. Producing. You can't earn to much money because then you get lazy, just enough to see you show up each day, with the amount of sleep you need for your energy level to produce as much as possible.

Nice Philosophy he? Full of ethics and deep Human values.

Bentham with his Utilitarianism philosophy comes in to play, maybe we can do again a little game because that's the trademark of certain organizations. riddles and things hidden in plain sight. Utilitarianism = Illuminatiarism, or how would you yourself name the philosophy based on the Illuminaty? Ok that's all speculation but look at the death of Aristotle and combine it with the date of death of Bentham, the inventor of Utilitarianism. Then we have 322 and 1832.

Benthams body was preserved, his head was mummified but his body had to exist of bones, so no mummification. His head was missing. Why is that weird and why all these facts?

because if you go to skull and bones you see only 2 dates 322 and 1832, a head and bones. When you study philosphy your book begins with 322 and ends with 1832 or the other way around.

When you put these 2 philosophers together they don't mean much for each other but when you look deeper, you will see that Utilitarianism combined with Aristotle and Marx + money in the form of a digital current, provides the perfect blend to respect the natural laws of Ancient Philosophers by a form of energy transfer to money.

Money you can give away as a loan, you can invest it, by doing this you don't have a big capital or any of the things that Ancient Philosophers protested against concerning Natural laws.

I don't know if having to much wealth/capital has a negative impact on life. But Aristotle was convinced. The question is therefore... Did Marx knew that he could pass the ancient philosophers with what he was writing? Strange thing to point to is the formula Marx used in his book M-C-M and C-M-C, some people say it's intentionally this formula to point at something else. Personally I think physics. Again something hidden in plain sight in the form of a joke to the initiates. This was a tip someone gave me... And indeed that is the humor of people that know things we don't. They love it when you see it right in front of you but you have no idea.

Utilitarianism stands for a society with the most amount of happiness. The goal is thus the most amount of happiness in order to base your decisions and to say whether a decision is ethically and/or morally correct. So when the most amount of happiness is achieved then ethics or morals are respected, it does not matter how many people are involved and how the happiness is divided between the people. Looks great right?

But if 20 people are just 'OK' and 1 person is super happy, and this person is so happy that the sum total of happiness is bigger then when all 21 are all just 'fine' then this is ethically correct and morally a right thing to do. It's about SACRIFICE. It is allowed that some people have to sacrifice themselves as long as the total amount of happiness is the biggest. So who are these people who have to sacrifice themselves and how many people are we talking about? Do they know it about themselves?

Can you see that people who are addicted to status, property and extravagance,.. the people who get the feeling that they are better then all the rest, that they own the world, that those people do reach a higher state of happiness compared to people that don't really care about a lot of property/money and do care about other people instead of own interest? Own interest is by the way the hidden hand from Adam Smith (Hidden or Invisible hand).

But what does Aristotle say about all this? No man can have more then a certain amount of property/possessions/wealth. He is very strict and clear about these rules in his works. So do we have a problem? If the economy was based on exchange of goods there was indeed a problem but Karl Marx and the banking system provide the solution. You take your money and you hand it out as a loan so you actually don't have a whole lot of capital but each month you get a certain amount that covers your BIG LUXURIOUS EXPENSES.

This way you escape Aristotle and Plato's advise on how Life works and the Laws of nature on the division of property between the amount of people on earth. This way you escape the possible negative force when having to much, and you use Marx his theory on how to fully exploit your workers for your own advantage, meantime you give those workers loans so you don't brake the

Natural Laws Ancient Philosophers talk about. And above all, these loans even give you more money because of the interest. As if Marx his exploitation of workers isn't enough. They also have to pay interest on loans. But don't worry the Utilitarianism way of life solves the problem it's all fucking ethical and morally tolerable and accepted. (322-1832. Aristotle + Bentham)

And all this is possible because of contracts, without legal agreement this would not exist. No loans, no investments, no labor contracts, ... The rule of Law and Order is indeed very important.

If money controls workers and money controls the energy of the workers, then money controls energy. If the stock market is based on money and money controls the workers then who is the stock? A good name right? funny right ;) Besides the hidden hand has a far more important role to play then generally accepted. But they don't give us all the information.

This whole text seems like a mockery because it is a mockery. Why? Because that's the manner they speak to us, amusement because of our lack of knowledge. The second reason is because the person who went back into Plato's cave was being mocked at. When people who know more then you mock you with riddles you don't understand, make sure that they think you are a really dumbass, the riddles will become much more easy because they think you're a stupid f°°K. Keep track of things, connect dots and see where the arrow points. by reading books random on good faith we will not know the truth but can only speculate. There are people who do know. When you meet people who treat you this way, you can become mad or you can play the game. Smart people they mock them with harder riddles. So be a smart man, play a stupid muppet for the masters, deceive them, manipulate them, study psychology, take the information , use the information and let them become the puppets while thinking they are still the masters. Because that's what they have done and still are doing to us.

And please don't ride a goat, take the buss.

Resisting the Matrix

Resistance is a mental state. The Matrix is designed to make it easy to accept what it tells you, and to make it hard to filter the Truth from the lies. Resisting the Matrix requires understanding its operating principles and assumptions, rejecting them, and helping others to do the same.

The Matrix is fascist, the Matrix is deceptive, and the Matrix is bureaucracy. The Matrix is essentially the rule of the institution over the individual, and in it, the rights of the individual are subordinate to the rights of the institution. Individuals have to believe (or at least not actively oppose the idea) that large corporations have the right to protect their profits above all else, and thus dictate policy and law. They have to believe that this law is just, moral, and seemingly based upon reason. Or, they have to feel unaffected by the law on an individual level. They have to accept the program, and be satisfied with the rewards given for doing so. They have to do their jobs, pay their taxes, and be content with their salary (at least to the point where their salary and the stability it provides are appealing enough to deter risking leaving the Matrix). Rejecting these beliefs is the first step in resisting the Matrix.

Furthermore, people must be insulated from the creative process. They have to forget that they are able to produce craft as individuals independent of large institutions, and they must feel entirely dependent upon the system to provide them with what they need. It is mostly through the violation of this principle that many who work with computers come to free themselves, or at least come to see the Matrix for what it is. Despite being products of the Matrix (for the most part), computers and the Internet enable humans to create individual works on a global scale: independent media, self-publishing, Free Open Source Software, computer music, computer art and graphics, and so on. Computers also enable independent people to communicate and build human-serving social structures outside of the Matrix.

However, note that computers aren't the only means of accomplishing this, and this time period isn't the first one of Exodus. In the 1960s, for example, people departed from the Matrix en-mass and independently created art, culture, and music, largely catalyzed by psychedelic drugs. Unfortunately, much of this structure collapsed due to a number of reasons, the main one being the hasty, ill-considered and unsustainable manner of its construction and the subsequent institutional and legal backlash. Miraculously, however, many of the core ideas have persisted, and their proliferation is largely the reason I am Aware and able to write this document today. It would seem that the present catalyst is a combination of the Internet and again psychedelics. Both of these phenomena provide a way of disconnecting yourself from the programmed reality and assumptions of the Matrix and taking your perceptions into your own hands. However, your "perception" is nothing but your individual dream that you have created as you have gone through life. There is the dream of the society that has been passed down generation after generation and instilled into your mind by your parents, friends, schools, and institutions. And then there is your individual dream. Each step of the way in your life you have lived subjectively, and depending upon how and where you grew up, who you hung around with, and the habits you formed, you created your little dream. Your "theory" on life while you stay completely unconscious of this. Everything that you think is "you", "I", "me", and everything you believe that you identify with is simply not you. It is not the truth. It is part of the giant web of individual dreams that everyone is in the clutches of on our planet. This is one of the main reasons why this world is the way it is, why it is so chaotic. You will scorn anyone who does not dream what you dream of, and someone will do the same to you. It is impossible for us to live the same individual dream because we cannot know everything about each other down to our core. It is a constant fog that grows bigger and bigger and more dense as each day passes. It is your ego and it is my ego. The dream is not real. If we want to even begin to understand what it means to exist as a human being on this planet and evolve, this truth must be learned and it is just the beginning. Somewhere along the way, the entities that have been running the show figured out how the ego works, and they have been doing a damn good job at distracting us from trying to find a way out of our dreams and the dream of society. Psychedelics are simply a tool, but one of many to truly explore and expand your consciousness. However, whether it be psychedelic substances or meditation, it is not the ultimate answer. It is simply showing you the door, but it is your choice whether or not you want to enter into the other side.

To persist, the Matrix requires control, and in democratic societies it maintains this control by filtering people's view of reality through corporate-owned mass media and television. In essence, the Matrix requires a form of thought control, but not in the science fiction sense. Instead, it achieves an effective enough manner of thought control by manufacturing consent. The large majority of the public has to "buy in". They have to believe that the news media give them an

accurate picture of the world. And by and large, they do believe this. Everything the general public knows about the world, they know through the Matrix. The symbols and images the Matrix presents to them have become more real than reality itself. Hence the popularity of the ungodly abomination that is Reality TV.

Note that while some media outlets do actively promote a political agenda of domination and control, on the whole it is not through some grand conspiracy that this process (or any process of the Matrix) functions. It is simply the way mass media is organized. Mass media is a machine that exists as a profit maximizing entity, and the most profitable news (and the cheapest news to produce) is recycled soundbytes and pre-packaged press releases from corporations and government. Furthermore, in the interest of preserving its revenue stream, news media cannot allow the public to hold any opinion that may threaten the authority and policy of government or the profitability of their sponsors, which are also machines of the Matrix and almost always directly involved in the business of domination and control. Thus the media must perpetuate the status quo. No news is good news.

Understanding this bias in the media is key to undoing the filter it applies. Consider who the advertisers and sponsors are. Beware of press releases disguised as investigative reporting. When possible, confirm mainstream, corporate produced stories with coverage from places like IndyMedia (go local), Wikinews, GNN, Politech, Free Speech TV, Democracy Now, Free Speech Radio News, and FAIR. A lot of the time these sources also cover many eye-popping items that for some reason don't even receive mention on corporate news media.

Last, and most assuredly not least, the Matrix seeks to identify and know its members at all times, in a misguided attempt to maintain control. It demands total surrender of your privacy to function in it. It is by breaking this last property of the Matrix that we come to truly free ourselves from it; to create economies, communication, and culture independent of its control.

Of course, the ultimate form of resistance is to fully disconnect from any and all dependence upon and allegiance to government and institution; to remove yourself from the power structure of the Matrix, and contribute your economic output to resistance economies. It is this form of resistance that faces the most violent opposition from the Matrix, since providing this economic power is the primary function of Humanity, as it sees it.

Unfortunately for many this form of resistance is simply unattainable due to family and social ties, especially starting from your first realization of the size and scope of the Matrix. However, unlike in movie, it is possible to liberate yourself gradually instead of immediately, and in some cases this can prove easier than an 'all-at-once' attempt. It starts with disconnecting. Cut out TV from your life entirely, especially TV news and Reality TV shows. You should be able to get all your information and entertainment from the web, or from real reality (or from the occasional movie). Avoid chain stores where possible, especially for food. Supporting smaller (especially sustainable) business keeps entrepreneurial and independent business spirit alive. Getting and staying out of debt (especially debt without equity, or rapidly depreciating equity such as car loans) is crucial, as debt is a primary mechanism the Matrix uses to ensure your obedience. Also, if you are a salaried employee, working a 40 hour (or perhaps even 35) hour work week can be a big start to declaring your freedom from the machine and the corporate American peer-pressure to be a diligent slave. It

also frees up huge amounts of mental energy which is then available for resistance.

From here, a limited form of resistance whereby you leave the Matrix for short periods of time (long enough to conduct purchases, business transactions, and communications with the underground) is well within the reach of all computer literate individuals, and functioning as a consumer is sufficiently supportive of the Anonymous Economy for it to be sustainable. Moreover, the probability of discovery of this sort of activity can be reduced as much as you choose. Doing this effectively is the subject of this HOWTO.

As you progress, you will notice yourself developing one or more separate identities, or pseudonyms. It is best to build as much insulation between these nyms as possible. They shouldn't appear to know each other, shouldn't really talk about the same stuff or buy the same things, and above all should be diligently separated from your original physical identity. Maintain different wallets, bags, user accounts and possibly even computers. In short, develop one or more Tyler Durdens, except without all the insanity, self-destruction, and sociopathic behavior. Or with it, if it helps.

The adept and the entrepreneurial will find it an easy step from here to total freedom. The next stage is to go into business for yourself. It doesn't have to be an anonymous business, but those who manage such an achievement do enjoy the satisfaction that they are directly subverting the Matrix and helping to weaken its hold on everyone.

Subverting the Matrix

While resisting the Matrix is an act of mental rebellion, subverting the Matrix is an act of social revolution. It requires understanding the types of human communities that exist outside of the control of the Matrix. It also requires understanding what sustains them, and if and how they directly or indirectly weaken the structure and control of the Matrix. Once you understand this, it is possible to intelligently align yourself with communities that actively weaken the control of the Matrix.

Gift Culture

Gift Culture (also known as Free Culture, or the Gift Economy) is a social structure where your status is determined by how much you are able to give away. It is not mutually exclusive to any other economic system, and examples of gift economies exist on top of capitalist, communist and socialist economies.

Gift culture has brought forth some of the most astounding recent achievements of the human race, including the scientific research community, much of the World Wide Web, the entire Open Source movement, vulnerability and security research, and Wikipedia, just to name a few

examples. Gift economies tend to function best in the digital world, where something can be given without reducing the inventory of the giver.

However, the Burningman project is a massive experiment in bringing Gift Culture back into the physical world, and quite successful at that. Well over 35,000 people populate Black Rock City in the middle of the desert every year to give as much as they can to each other. The event serves in part as a model for the time when energy becomes abundant and human beings are capable of interstellar space travel. Obviously the burning of The Man is the climax of the event.

This is no small coincidence either. Gift culture does subvert the primary mechanisms of the Matrix. The Matrix subsists by transforming human endeavor into economic output which it uses to maintain its control. Gift culture, on the other hand, releases human endeavor for the good of all who would receive it. When items are given instead of sold, the power and control obtained through ownership is eliminated. Furthermore, in the case of Open Source Software, the fact that full freedom over the source code is also given means that code that the Matrix would never willingly create is readily available for the purposes of this HOWTO.

It is interesting to note that even machines of the Matrix are motivated to participate in gift culture - especially in the Open Source movement. It benefits many corporations as well as governments to have a common reference platform upon which they can build their individual products and infrastructures. Their cooperation in building this common platform vastly reduces the cost they would have paid to develop their own platform in-house, and is also inevitably cheaper than paying a single entity to do the same. The combined experience and widely distributed expertise, as well as the flexibility of modifying the common platform to perform a wide variety of tasks, yields a better system for all, and cheaper. In the digital world where copies are free, capitalism compels Gift Culture.

Unfortunately, some companies, such as Amazon.com, reap tremendous benefits off of Open Source Software, yet have a company policy of zero contribution back to the community. Other symptoms of this problem include Microsoft's war on the security research community, and the tendency of (even State funded) University Professors to refuse to provide Open Source reference implementations of their work. There are mechanisms discussed in this HOWTO that enable this trend to be reversed, which leads us nicely into the next cultural segment.

Information Anarchy

A closely related social structure to Gift Culture is Information Anarchy. The idea behind Information Anarchy is that all information should be as widely and freely disseminated as possible. The cultural ethos is vehemently at odds with Intellectual Property, and refuses to recognize any such law (or suffer any code) that abridges free exchange of information.

Needless to say, the machines of the Matrix don't take too fond a view on this ideology. Unlike gift culture, which is an indirect subversion of the mechanisms of the Matrix, Information Anarchy directly challenges the Matrix's perceived right of ownership of human ideas. The past decade has

seen an unprecedented decline in the freedom of information due to some of the more rabid elements of the Matrix. The machines of the Matrix now draw tremendous power from ideas and digital content/information. Recent examples include the DMCA, extension of copyright duration, the harsh criminalization of copyright infractions, and the resulting side-effects which lead to the criminalization of certain forms of technology. The legal climate for free speech and innovation has never looked darker.

However, hope is not lost. The future looks so dark precisely for the reason that Information Anarchy poses such a grave threat to a major power source for so many parasitical machines. On some level, the Matrix knows its hold is tenuous. At every opportunity, the Matrix will tell you that protecting Intellectual Property encourages creativity. It has even developed an amusing array of propaganda to promote this idea, even going so far as to begin the brainwashing at an early age. (Yes, the National Counterintelligence Executive is in fact a real office of the US government, apparently one of its major propaganda arms. Their stuff is hilarious. I recommend printing some out at your local copy shop before it becomes classic.)

All of this nonsense is observably false. Societies have always been most successful when communication and ideas were open to all. It is important to remember that the world didn't always operate this way, it was only when the ruling elite of the Matrix realized that ideas and creative expression are easily converted to economic power that they took claim over them. Economic systems can and will adapt to a form that is more profitable for human creators instead of their machine owners.

Five chapters of this HOWTO are devoted to protecting your digital identity and are easily applicable to contributing to the goal of Information Anarchy and providing even more economic incentive to move towards alternate revenue models and/or Gift Culture. In every opportunity possible, do not support the system of Intellectual Property that the Matrix has created. Naturally as its power wanes, it will become weaker and less relevant, as content creators seek their pay through other means. The cancer starves, and dies.

The Anonymous Internet Economy

So as of late, a major source of the erosion of civil liberties stems from the fact that casual economic transactions are becoming increasingly difficult to conduct without permanent, identifiable information being associated with them. With the advent and increase in the volume of Internet commerce, casual purchases of personal items, books, software, and even medication are now irrevocably tied to your own personal identity. Bookstores such as Amazon now build complete dossiers of sorts on their customers reading habits, and much of this information is available publicly.

As a result, the natural reaction to these circumstances is to find methods to make Internet commerce behave more like physical commerce, where you have the option of anonymity by using cash or cash-backed identity free payment methods. An Anonymous Internet Economy.

The Matrix is providing massive economic incentive to create this economy as well. It has recently been revealed that the FBI writes over 30,000 "National Security Letters" in the US each year. Consider how easy it would be for them to demand records of everyone at Amazon who might like to buy a particular book, or who has ordered "indecent" materials from websites? Amazon already does classification of consumer's interests for marketing purposes. Their engine can perform this classification instantly. What would they have to say about what books you like to read? How about Google, and the types of adword sites you are typically presented on the search website/via gmail? Google and many other search engines maintain indefinite logs of who searches for what keywords, along with lots of other data. These are prime targets for National Security Letters or just general government subpoena.

I provide the basics for conducting anonymous transactions cheaply in FIXME this section. You can use these techniques to get yourself started and comfortable with interacting with the Matrix anonymously. From there, the entrepreneurs in the audience may wish to start a business to start making some money in this new economy, and thus begin to fully escape from the control of the Matrix.

Markets of interest might include items in online games, anonymous web hosting, certain types of medicine, or even illegal electronics. For example, many people are too lazy to build a MythTV box, but personally I sure as hell would buy one over a crippled and ad-infested TiVo subscription service any day. If I watched TV, that is.

As you can see, most of these things go on above ground today, but for how long? And why at such high risk for consumers living in less accepting legal climates? What about those who would pay more for more protection? For example, some customers may be attracted simply to the ability to free themselves from marketing and government profiling. Those who purchase certain types of books might prefer if Amazon and whoever else didn't have this information tied to their physical identity.

Yet another possible white/grey market to tap might be a physical anonymous remailer service for people who would like to conceal their street address from someone mailing them something in order to avoid becoming listed in a database for marketing spam and/or to avoid general profiling and surveillance, or to be able to order a product that won't normally ship to their geographic location. Basically the way the system could work is through a website where you create a temporary account number or unique pseudonym. The package is then shipped to a relay point where the account number/pseudonym is read off, and a new label printed onto the package. It is then mailed to its new destination, and any electronic and paper records are destroyed. It also has the advantage that extremely paranoid users can potentially chain multiple locations together for extra security, so that competition does not necessarily compete for market share, but instead cooperates for it. You might consider marketing this as a "Virtual Office Solution" to avoid liability, if done above ground. A useful technique for verifying that packages have not been opened/examined en-route is to create a unique multicolored wax seal swirl using two or more candles, photograph the seal, and transmit the photograph electronically via encrypted email. Delivery/payment can be ensured using normal UPS/Fedex/USPS tracking numbers, which can be encrypted to the senders public key and then destroyed.

The demand for such a system might not be immediately visible now, but once the next Patriot Act or similar legislation removes all anonymity from the mail, the demand should skyrocket. This business has the advantage that it is extremely low setup overhead and is very easy to start small with low capital, just to test market demand. Once the business is proved worthwhile, FedEx and possibly other major carriers offer bulk shipping rate accounts to merchants that could be taken advantage of, bringing the overhead work and cost to your customers potentially very low.

Taking this idea a step further yields a "ghost walker" contract market, much like the ones described in FIXMEToward A Private Digital Economy. Most of the P2P token-based nonsense there can be ignored, but his key idea could be transfered to a ebay-like auction site. Basically the idea is that people would contract the services of someone who is skilled at staying off the radar to conduct transactions that for various reasons they do not want linked to their identity (again, buying books, vitamins, medicine, regionally available items, web hosting, illegal electronics, and so on). Sort of like the inverse of a Private Investigator, these people would do anything from purchasing items, mailing and delivering packages, donating to charities, acting as couriers, business agents/representatives, mail forwarders, and so on. This can already be carried out in a guerrilla fashion on community/local city classified ad servers such as the nearly universal Craigslist (where it is possible to contract people from different state and country jurisdictions quite easily). In the ideal situation, a dedicated website would be created. Each "ghost walker" would have a nym (possibly paying a fee to do so, both to support the site and to discourage morphing), complete with ratings and reviews, prices per task/risk factor, and so on. Contracts would be posted by clients containing a generic description of the task, and interested ghost walkers would contact the buyer with prices. The buyer would then select a particular ghost walker to reveal the complete details of the contract to, and terms of payment. Given the tendency to increased total surveillance, lots of regular people may be interested in using this service.

So there are numerous markets that can be potentially very lucrative while at the same time helping to build a social structure independent of domination and control. In general, any mechanism of state control creates markets for equipment or components that can be used to circumvent this control. Keep your eyes open for opportunities. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please feel free to contact me so that I can update the HOWTO for all to benefit as we work together to free ourselves.

Freedom Seekers are Not Terrorists

Essentially this HOWTO represents the hacker community truly claiming independence for itself from national and institutional rule. While many the ideas and techniques present in this document can be found elsewhere, I believe this is the first time such a coherent, consistent, and focused collection of these ideas has been assembled for a single purpose. 17 years ago, we made our Declaration of Independence. This body of code-law represents a manner of Constitution of

Cyberspace. A basic set of rights we claim for ourselves through our use of technology.

Because the accusation will inevitably be made, I would just like to emphasize the distinction between freedom seekers and terrorists. The type of resistance and revolution discussed here is non-violent, and singularly focused upon allowing an individual to have real freedom through privacy and anonymity. While reactionary individuals might argue that the knowledge presented in this HOWTO could aid actual terrorists, the reality is they've already had much better training which has proved to be quite effective in practice. Furthermore, we're talking about people who are willing to give their lives in their quest: people whose families, friends, and their own lives have already been destroyed by Empire. These people will stop at nothing. They don't need this HOWTO to create new identities for privacy purposes when perfectly valid ones can be stolen readily. Nor do they care much about surveillance, since surveillance can't stop a suicide mission. What's worse, is that on some level the police state must know this. Even being generous with the reasonable doubt, all evidence seems to indicate that at best it simply used the tragic events of Sept 11 as an excuse for a long awaited massive power grab, with the resulting legislation doing far more to target the average citizen than any particular terrorist network.

I recently had a discussion on Usenet where it was asserted that taking action to protect yourself and withdraw from the Matrix might generate even more excuses for introducing oppressive legislation and policy. I believe this will not be the case, and that moreover this thinking is in fact defeatist and even dangerous for a few reasons.

First, the Matrix will not and can not overtly fight this behavior, as any public attention given to it will only provide it with more energy and momentum. The Matrix media filter won't even allow the individual pieces of information that lead to the conclusions of this introduction to be discussed for this very reason. There is no way it would willingly publicize this ideology in its entirety, even to attempt attack it. Furthermore, there is no need to. The Matrix already has more than enough material to drive through as much oppressively restrictive legislation as it likes in the name of fighting kiddie porn, the War on Drugs, the War on Terror, and in the name of protecting corporate profits. As stated above, it is already taking full advantage of this fact, to Orwellian ends. The interesting phenomenon is that the more ridiculous the regulations become, the more commonplace it will be for the public to want to circumvent them, which only serves to strengthen resistance economies.

Second, if you look at all of history, freedom has never been given to a populace. Left to its own devices, the state only ever grows more powerful. It never surrenders power over citizens freely. Take any instance in history where people have established rights for themselves, and you will see it was the result of a long, drawn out battle that the state simply lacked the resources to continue to fight effectively. Prohibition wasn't abolished because people acted good, honest and sober, it was because they got falling down drunk and alcohol consumption soared to new heights while the Puritan state was powerless to continue to oppress the newly criminalized middle class. Likewise, Civil rights weren't won because Africans obediently stayed in their designated rolls, complicitly accepting "separate but equal" facilities and politely tolerating discrimination. It was because they practiced civil disobedience and active resistance against injustice.

I believe in civil disobedience, and more importantly, the clear distinction between morality and law. I believe that it is defensive, defeatist thinking to say that "if we just be good, they will reward us and repeal laws." The laws - the DMCA, the Patriot Act, the REAL ID act, recent supreme court decisions and the now entirely conservative dominated court - are already essentially fascist and will only continue getting "tougher" on "crime" and "terror", stripping away the rights of citizens in the name of "safety" with little real gain except the hoisting of that Floating Eye on the dollar bill ever higher above the base. The total surveillance state has been a goal of the current cabal for time out of mind.

Third and finally, once again I'm not advocating violence here, or even any sort of crime that has a victim. I'm advocating creating a social and economic structure based on anonymity (not necessarily illegality) that drains the corporate state of power and thus weakens its ability to enforce fascist law and practice.

In my view, the only thing that will cause the state to rescind is the realization that much like in the 1920s with prohibition, it has criminalized a vast portion of its population that it is now powerless to control, and furthermore that its fascist law has done nothing to safeguard against the true monsters that its foreign policy has created.

Continuation on its current course of action will lead the Matrix to experience ever increasing instances of identity theft, repeated infiltration of data warehouses, massive underground surveillance rings, and so on. These actions are not advocated in this HOWTO, but they will inevitably become more commonplace as the Matrix continues to make it easier to steal an existing identity than to create a new one or otherwise escape from ceaseless surveillance.

At this point in time, the Matrix faces two options. It can either choose to allow us to be free, and create official sanctioned means for people who wish to free themselves from endless surveillance and total control to operate anonymously within the system, or it can choose to fight war after costly war on civil liberties and basic human rights until enough people are fed up with its behavior that they begin to depart en-mass. Again.

But we already know the choice the Matrix will make. Already I can see the chain reaction of propaganda, the sound-byte media precursors that trigger the onset of an emotion, designed specifically to overwhelm logic and reason. An emotion that the Matrix will use to blind the masses from the simple and obvious truth: We are going to be free, and there is nothing it can do to stop us.

Spreading the Word

Initially I had planned for a small distribution of this document to only a select few, to attempt to "stay under the radar". But as I indicate above, I now realize that is a flawed approach. Much like in a mixed network, the more people working to protect themselves and their identities, the better off the end result is. The stronger the support economies grow, the better able the resistance is to function autonomously.

An IRC friend of mine has designed some FIXME slick business cards that can be distributed at functions, protests or wherever. Online print shops will typically print 200-500 of these for around $20. If you're itching to give me some kind of donation for some reason, you can direct your funds towards that instead. It even works on a sliding scale. For example, you can buy some sticker paper for like $5 at your local office supply store and print out some stickers to put up at coffee shops, clubs, bars, Internet cafes, bookstores or anywhere intelligent people might be able to jot down or quickly visit a URL. If anyone wants to create another design, send it to me and I will post it here also.

Target Audience

This document is written at a technical level appropriate for "power users" - people who like to tinker with their computer configurations to get the most out of their experience. Novice computer users who are uncomfortable tweaking settings, editing configuration files, and occasionally using the command line probably will struggle with much of the material regardless of OS, unfortunately (though at least one person has offered to help elaborate the more technically involved sections to help novices along - we'll see how that pans out).

I try to be as operating system agnostic as possible, providing information for Windows, Mac OS, and Linux, but due to the open and readily customizable nature of the system, the Linux material probably will be the most well developed.

As far as demographics, I expect this document to be useful to a wide variety of people from several walks of life. In particular, some of the major categories are:

Civil Libertarians

Those who are concerned with the gradual erosion of their personal freedoms will probably find nearly the entirety of this document useful and interesting, since it is intended to provide techniques and countermeasures to restore nearly every right that has been lost due to the Wars on Drugs,Porn, and Terror. It is now possible for the anyone (the US government, frivolous civil litigants, P.I.'s, and so on) to enumerate just about everything in your home without many warrants, simply by subpoenas or a National Security Letters. Somehow I doubt this situation was exactly what the Framers of the Constitution had in mind... This document can help you to keep as much of your personal belongings and reading habits actually private and out of numerous commercial databases (which are readily availably to law enforcement).

Whistleblowers

Whistleblowers who are interested in exposing wrongdoing, corruption, cover-up, or conspiracy at their workplaces will find this document useful for protecting their identities while contacting the press, or otherwise disseminating evidence over the Internet. When you are jeopardizing your job (and possibly your life) to expose wrongdoing, you must assume that NO institution will be able to protect your identity from someone who is determined to silence you. Your only option is to make sure no one knows who you are in the first place until such time as your safety from retaliation can be guaranteed. If followed carefully and diligently, this document will show you how to accomplish this.

Bloggers and Independent Journalists

Similar to whistleblowers, bloggers and forum posters often find themselves the target of harassment, especially when reporting on controversial material, or even when people who comment on their pages choose to do so. While it has recently been ruled that bloggers are afforded the same rights and protections as journalists, in cases where the blogger is exposing corruption or negligence at their workplace, additional measures of protecting oneself may be desired. In some cases, it may be desirable to publish pseudonymously simply to avoid the stress (and expense!) of having to deal with frivolous lawsuits such as these.

"Political Dissidents" and Inquisitive Minds

Forget about China, even in the USA it's no secret that the FBI has consistently harassed those who have dared to speak out against the status quo. Targeted groups include vegans, Catholics, Quakers, peace activists, environmental volunteers, 3rd party candidates and campaign workers, independent journalists and bloggers, and even members of the mainstream press. What should be most disturbing to the average citizen is how easily it is to become mistaken for one of these "trouble makers" simply for buying (or being recommended) the wrong book on Amazon, posting on the wrong blog, buying certain types of food on a credit card, donating to certain charities, etc. With the advent of aggressive data mining and aggregation, it is all too easy to be lumped in with "the wrong crowd". If followed properly, this document will help you to retain your freedom to investigate alternative views and information without leaving an electronic trail of this activity to open yourself up to harassment. It should also help you minimize the damage a determined FBI agent (or vindictive ex-spouse or other enemy who has hired a PI) is able to do to you.

People with Enemies

As hinted at above, it's not just dissidents who need to be concerned either. Surveillance and draconian law can be used as dangerous weapons. All it takes is for one motivated enemy to hire a PI with access to the major data warehouses to dig into your life, find something that they can use, and then phone in to report you, or simply blackmail you. Anyone with a vindictive ex-spouse, political adversary, or even a feuding neighbor can be the target of this abuse.

Programmers and Security Researchers

Due to the DMCA and insanely broken patent law, programmers have found their freedom of speech horrendously restricted in the USA. Many security researchers have been afraid to discuss the privacy implications of copyright protection technology that is essentially spyware. Others are afraid to publish vulnerability assessments of cryptographic systems that may be tangentially related to copyright infringement, or even simply software in general. This document can teach such programmers and researchers how to conceal their identities and thus assist peers who are operating in legal climates that still respect the freedoms of speech and innovation. You can hire hackers here: http://n7l53ojkyhglsjrh.onion/

The Video Game Underground

The DMCA has also been used to harass video game hackers and cheaters. Some gaming companies will ban you from their online services if they discover your involvement or subscription to "cheat forums". Most will not hesitate to issue bogus DMCA takedown notices to cheat/mod websites that operate in the USA. Software that modifies online games to provide additional features, cheats, or automation is also the target of DMCA harassment. Furthermore, programmers who publicly reverse engineer and re-implement open source game servers find themselves the target of lawsuits. This document should assist these people to continue to play and modify games how they see fit without fear of persecution.

Moonlighters, Double-Shifters, and Consultants

In a similar vein, those who are working multiple jobs may wish to conceal this fact from their employers due to fear of retaliation. I expect the most typical use case of this document will be programmers working as consultants, or who wish to contribute to Open Source projects in their free time.

Potential Victims of Identity Theft (Everyone)

This document can also help those who are interested in protecting their identities and/or financial information from being stolen due to their commerce online and elsewhere. As mentioned above, data warehouses such as Choicepoint are essentially making identity a commodity. It is inevitable that this data will be leaked and stolen again and again. With identity becoming an increasingly integral aspect of functioning in society, black markets that sell this data will continue to be extremely profitable. Just like the War on Drugs, the War on Terror fought through the politics of domination and control will lead to ever escalating levels of waste, destruction, and chaos. The best way to protect yourself is to minimize your digital footprint: Use anonymous forms of payment online, and conceal your name and mailing address.

Entrepreneurs

The last major category of people who are likely to find this document useful are those who are interested in providing privacy and anonymity services and software to others. Privacy and anonymity are difficult problems. There are many holes to be filled in, usability issues to be addressed, and markets to be built. To this group of people, every privacy problem and legal restriction should represent a potential market to get involved in. However, DO NOT SELL SNAKE OIL. If you cannot stand up to legal or other pressure, you need to inform your users of this fact clearly, so they are sure to take appropriate precautions while using your service (especially if you are located within the USA). Very few, if any, privacy services are capable of operating as stand-alone one-shot solutions. What is needed is a series of tools and components that can be combined arbitrarily. Focus on one component, and do it well.