

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Mar 2, 2002 3:12 pm

Subject: Giving Remote Internet Voting a Chance

Dear EuronacUEE subscriber,

The following headline recently appeared as a POLITICKER HEADLINE in the online newsletter The Politicker:

NATIONAL NEWS

CALIFORNIA GAINS OPPORTUNITY TO TEST OUT REMOTE INTERNET VOTING

CALIFORNIA GETS OPPORTUNITY TO TEST NEW VOTING TECHNOLOGIES
(LA Times) A federal judge in Los Angeles on Wednesday ruled that California has to replace outmoded punch-card voting machines by the 2004 presidential election.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-000011395feb14.story?coll=la-headlines-cali>
fornia

Here's a copy of the e-mail I subsequently sent to the newsletter:

Dear Politicker,

I was shocked to read the above headline in the latest issue of Politicker, which I just received, since, despite my own best efforts since 1996, there has been exactly one real-world test of ?remote Internet voting? so far, the Democratic primary in Arizona in March of 2000 (the existence of which I personally facilitated) and, again despite my intensive efforts, in this case to convince the FEC and the Office of the Secretary of State of California to do so, neither these nor any other electoral body of competent authority has been willing, not to certify a remote Internet voting system, but even to specify the criteria according to which one MIGHT be certified for use.

As you'll see in the attached document, built around a broadcast exchange between me and Connie McCormack, Registrar-Recorder of Los Angeles County, while Judge Wilson's recent decision ordering nine California counties to replace their antiquated punch card systems with newer and better voting systems might seem to be the perfect occasion to introduce remote Internet voting into the mix, especially since these counties don't really have the money to buy the expensive DRE/touch screen systems that would satisfy Judge Wilson's criteria, that's not what's going to happen, unless we act now.

I'll let you read the document, which explains all this. But I want

to make the point that your headline, while fun to contemplate, is extremely misleading and untrue.

A more accurate headline would be "California On Brink of Losing Opportunity to Test (and Use) Remote Internet Voting."

It's hard enough to make the arguments necessary to persuade citizens and policy-makers that secure remote Internet voting is feasible, viable, cost-effective, worthwhile, and inevitable. But it becomes harder and much more confusing if the very Net media we all depend upon for timely, accurate coverage of this issue don't make the effort necessary to carefully distinguish between "Internet voting," which now has come to mean putting computers in polling places and connecting them to electoral servers, and "remote Internet voting," which is what, until recently, I called "Internet voting," and which refers to allowing people to vote securely over the Internet from competent electronic devices anywhere, anytime within the designated election time frame.

For the classic formulation of "remote Internet voting" (formerly "Internet voting"), please see the attached copy of the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative, which I wrote and circulated six years ago, in 1996.

For a more contemporary effort to convince the two leading candidates to replace Bill Jones, who as California's incumbent Secretary of State over the last eight years has single handedly done more to block (remote) Internet voting in California and nationally than anyone else, please take a look at the attached copy of an e-mail I sent earlier this week to both Kevin Shelley and Michela Alioto. Since one of them is likely to be the next Secretary of State, I'm trying, with these letters and in other ways, to lay the groundwork to convince whomever does become the next Secretary of State that ?remote Internet voting? is a viable option as part of the solution to the state's electoral problems.

You can, if you like, consider all this material a submission from me as a NetPulse Contributing Editor from California. I hope you can sift through all this material and use some of it in the next issue of NetPulse. I could, if you like, do the sifting myself and produce a Soundoff or other extended piece dealing with the current state of "secure remote Internet voting" in California and elsewhere.

In fact, why not start up a separate newsletter just to cover "Internet voting" and "remote Internet voting" and any additional permutations that arise as the transition of elections into cyberspace continues to evolve?

Let me know as soon as you can. Before "remote Internet voting" can change everything, it seems that everything must be changed first. It should be exciting to watch.

Using Internet Voting to Save California from Electoral Disaster

Thanks to the ACLU and Common Cause, and U.S. District Judge Stephen V. Wilson, we now have a tremendous opportunity to achieve the implementation of remote Internet voting by March, 2004.

February 14, 2002

State Ordered to Replace Old Vote Machines

Ruling: Los Angeles and eight other large counties must update equipment by the 2004 presidential election, federal judge decides.

By HENRY WEINSTEIN, TIMES STAFF WRITER

A federal judge in Los Angeles on Wednesday ruled that California has to replace outmoded punch-card voting machines by the 2004 presidential election.

U.S. District Judge Stephen V. Wilson's decision is the first ruling in the nation requiring the elimination of obsolete voting machines in the aftermath of the controversial 2000 presidential election. Similar suits are pending in a number of other states.

For the entire article, go to:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-000011395feb14.story?coll=la-headlines-cali>
fornia

Nine days after the Federal court's decision, the Registrar-Recorder of Los Angeles County, Connie McCormack, appeared as a guest on "Talk of the City," hosted by Kitty Felde on KPCC 89.3 FM, a National Public Radio station broadcasting from Pasadena City College. I gave them a call.

Caller:

Thanks for taking my call.

Host:

Sure.

Caller:

I wanted to compliment the Registrar and let everyone know that when you have a highly-trained and conscientious and non-partisan staff, you can get good results with punch cards, which wasn't the case in Florida because most of those factors weren't present.

What I'd like to say is that everything you've been saying tells me what we need to do is have Internet voting, both in the polling places and from remote locations in people's homes. Elderly people are happy to use new technology. We've had a call-in from a disabled person who says it's embarrassing and troublesome and difficult to get to vote. All of these problems are solved if people can vote from home over the Internet in a secure way. And the last caller but one said, "The whole state is voting electronically." Well, to do that, you need to let people vote over the Internet, and I think that would be a great idea if we could do that and I think it could be put into place at a cost and at a speed that would satisfy all the legal requirements that are now facing you.

Host:

Well, Connie McCormack, what's the latest on Internet voting?

Guest:

You know, everything you're saying, it just sounds so right and it really does until....There was an Internet Task Force of the top experts that the Secretary of State put together who came in on their first meeting, all these techies saying, "We can do this" and left eight months later saying, "We absolutely cannot." The issues become security and if you can hack into the Pentagon and all these other companies? sites the problem of security is not solvable at this time according to the experts.

Note:

For the entire California Internet Voting Task Force report, released on January 18, 2000, go to:

<http://www.ss.ca.gov/executive/ivote/>

I personally don't know of any "techies" who went into that Task Force thinking Internet voting was feasible and then decided it wasn't. I'd be glad to hear from McCormack who exactly they were.

The Registrar-Recorder claims that "the problem of security is not solvable at this time according to the experts." Well, some experts think it is and some experts think it isn't. There is certainly no consensus on this point. That's why additional tests, demonstrations, and deliberations are required to establish legitimate standards for secure remote Internet voting and to develop a procedure for certifying systems that can meet these standards.

Guest:

So at this point in time even though there are several companies trying to get a certified system...remember, nobody can vote on a voting system in California--and in 38 of the other states--without it being certified through a Federal and a state process to make sure it's going to be accurate and there's not a single company at this point in time that has a product that meets the rigorous criteria.

Note:

Of course no remote Internet voting system has been certified. Both agencies referred to by McCormack--the Office of California's Secretary of State and the Federal Election Commission--have refused, despite countless urgings from me and others, to set such standards, at whatever extreme level of security, accuracy, availability, and other criteria they choose, and disallow the use of any remote Internet voting system that fails to meet these standards.

Guest:

I think it's coming in the future. I think that we're going to see this. Why not? I mean, everyone's using the Internet. But as of right now--and I don't think in the next two to three year--but I hope within the next five, Marc's going to be absolutely right and this will be available at, you know, libraries and, by the way, our website is www.lavote.net. If you haven't received your sample ballot and you want to know where to go vote, just go in there: www.lavote.net and

click on "Where do I vote?", type in your address, and bingo. It's totally interactive. You can look up your sample ballot. We have 3,154 different varieties of sample ballot depending on where you live.

Note:

This is a breathtaking combination of changing the subject, distorting what I said, and gibberish. In what sense I'm I "going to be absolutely right"? In saying that remote Internet voting will be available within the next five years? That's not what I said. I said we need to implement remote Internet voting now as a solution to the dilemma created by Judge Wilson's order and the lack of money at the county level.

Ms. McCormack is saying we can't do that because remote Internet voting is not secure. The authorities she cites on this point argue that it is fundamentally and intrinsically insecure, that it cannot be made secure by any means. So, if they're right, how will it be possible to allow remote Internet voting in five years, or ten, or a hundred?

But if it can be made secure and the "authorities" refuse to acknowledge this, on account of non-technological biases against remote Internet voting and the changes in the social distribution of power and influence it might cause (similar to the opposition of record conglomerates to peer-to-peer file sharing systems), then the problem we face is one of values and interests and not of technologically-generated security.

Five years ago people told me that remote Internet voting was a good idea, but not just yet. "Wait five years," they said. I have. Now the chief elections officer of the largest voting entity in the U.S. is telling me, "You know, everything you're saying, it just sounds so right? I hope within the next five, Marc's going to be absolutely right and this will be available at, you know, libraries."

I've heard that before. I think they're stalling, and playing us for fools. I think we could have secure remote Internet voting now, only six years after I first proposed it publicly in the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative in 1996.

And by the way, I don't want to be "absolutely right" just about having Internet voting available in "libraries," where many people already vote in various pre-Internet voting ways. What I, and many others, want is to vote securely over the Internet from our offices, homes, boats, aircraft, backyards, destination resorts, cars (but not while driving), and every other place the Internet now or ever will reach, stationary or mobile, domestic or foreign, on- or off-planet.

Host:

Wow.

Guest:

Click and it comes up for you. This is modern wonderful stuff and Marc's correct. At some point we're going to be voting that way. Unfortunately, the security issue has not yet been solved.

Host: Marc, thanks a lot for the call.

Host:

We also got a request from a listener to basically sum up the court mandate. Basically, it's requiring all Registrar-Recorders to get rid of punch card voting by 2004?

Guest:

The lawsuit dealt with the nine counties in California--which is 75% of the registered voters voted on these--you know, big counties are the ones that have punch card voting, because punch card voting is the most inexpensive system and big counties are poor. So we're talking San Diego, San Bernardino, Alameda, L.A., Sacramento. These big counties are the ones?9 counties out of the 58?that have lost their voting systems. The other counties, many of them are using optical scan technology or a different kind of punch card that isn't the pre-scored kind that causes--supposedly--the problem. So we're the ones who are confronting the court order and have to do something else in time for March, 2004. Whether or not we'll have the time or the money to put in a state-of-the-art modern system or whether we have to transition to a paper system in between is, at this point, not totally determined.

Host:

And is there any challenge, any legal challenge, to that:

Guest:

Our attorneys are working with the Secretary of State's attorneys to request a stay but the feeling is that it has no chance and an appeal would take so long and while the appeal is in place, you know, we have to conform to the code.

Host:

Got it.

Guest:

So, unfortunately, it's not looking very positive.

Host:

Connie McCormack, we are out of time. Thank you so much for spending it with us.

Guest:

Thank you, Kitty.

Host:

You bet. This is 89.3, KPCC.

Note:

I couldn't have stated the dilemma any more clearly myself. Nine California counties with 75% of the registered voters in the state need to replace their antiquated punch card voting systems by March 2004. The big counties involved don't have the money to do so. They are hoping that they can get some money from a bond measure coming up for a vote on March 5th and from the Federal Government.

They are so desperate they may need to revert to even more antiquated voting methods in order to eliminate the now-banned punch cards.

This, they worry, will foul things up even worse than the punch cards ever could have. What to do? What to do?

A modest proposal: Put pressure on the Federal Election Commission and the Office of the Secretary of State to develop and issue rigorous standards for remote Internet voting systems. Encourage companies to have their remote Internet voting systems certified according to these standards. Buy, lease, or license these certified secure remote voting systems for use by the Nine Counties. Lobby for changes in whatever laws need to be modified to allow people to vote remotely over the Internet.

Encourage voters to sign up for remote Internet voting. Run plenty of tests and demonstrations to perfect the operation of the system and accustom people to using it. Determine roughly what percentage of registered and/or likely voters plan to vote remotely over the Internet and how many cannot access the Internet, refuse to use the Internet to vote, or absolutely require the ?polling place experience? to feel right.

Then the counties can buy enough expensive touch screen systems to accommodate those who will be coming to the polls. Since the availability of remote Internet voting will greatly reduce this number, a lot of money can be saved, probably more than enough to pay for the remote Internet voting resources employed in the overall voting program.

A final note on security, technology, and government operations. At this moment, the Bush Administration is asking for tens of billions of dollars in additional funding to use the Internet and its related technologies on behalf of what it considers to be its highest priority: electronic surveillance. It's a foregone assumption of this approach that the data gathered by Carnivore and other high-tech tools will be and will remain secure, protected against foreign and domestic enemies, and available only to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Security technologies perhaps not available to the general public, or even voting authorities, have no doubt been developed and are in use by those charged with watching us. Add to this the technologies developed by the Department of Defense to maintain the security and secrecy of battle-field transmissions and top-level policy consultations and it should be obvious that maintaining the security of a mere electronic ballot is child's play and could be provided on an off-the-shelf basis were the will to do so present.

One can only wonder why tens of billions of dollars will be spent for secure surveillance products and services while the Registrar-Recorders in nine California counties must go to sleep every night worrying where they will find the relative pittance they need to provide the voters in their jurisdictions with the means to vote in a legal, and, maybe, in a remote, way.

What we are facing is a dilemma even bigger than how to obey a District Court order. Technology, security, money, and priorities are what are involved in both moving to remote Internet voting and in coping with terrorist threats. What we need to decide as a society is whether, in

simplified terms and a possibly false dichotomy, we prefer to be free or to be safe, assuming for the moment that more electronic surveillance of all our activities is what will ultimately make us safe.

There is no shortage of people, companies and politicians willing to spend and receive vast amounts of money on behalf of the "surveillance-will-make-us-safe" alternative. There are a lot fewer individuals and groups speaking up for the "remote-Internet-voting-will-make-us-free" approach. There ought to be more and they ought to listen to us.

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Mar 2, 2002 5:52 pm

Subject: To Prevent Attacks on Concentrations of Power, Disperse Them

To Prevent Attacks on Concentrations of Power, Disperse Them

By Marc Strassman
President, Etopia
etopia@pacificnet.net

March 2, 2002

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The very architecture of the Internet derives from a desire on the part of those in the United States Defense Department who designed its precursor to create a system that would withstand very intense stresses, up to and including a thermonuclear (fusion H-bomb) attack on what was then called "American soil" and is now reverentially, not to say sanctimoniously, referred to in official Bushspeak as the "Homeland."

So it's not surprising that this same Internet, now immensely more powerful and ubiquitous than the original ARPAnet that gave rise to it, might be put to use to fight terrorism and defend the Homeland. Two main approaches to doing this have already emerged. They might be called the "Democratic-Progressive" approach and the "Secretive-Authoritarian" style.

The first method uses the capabilities of the Internet for distributed, decentralized and participative interaction, and takes advantages of the Internet's "do-it-anywhere" capabilities to move information and authority to the edges of the Net, involving and incorporating the general population in the process of national self-defense.

The second approach, in fact, is not really very suitable for the Internet at all, and so tends to ignore and avoid it.

Here are two examples of the democratic-progressive method, illustrating ways in which the government, the people, and the Internet can be synergized in support of national self-defense:

A Proposal for a Security Portal Network to Assist the Newly-Created Office of Homeland Security to Carry out its Mission

By Marc Strassman
President, Etopia
etopia@pacificnet.net

September 29, 2001

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One way to put the Internet to work in pursuit of domestic security is to build a "Security Portal Network" (SPN). Such a system, which could be built and run by the newly-formed Office of Homeland Security, might consist of 3,000 or so double-layered e-government portals, one in each county of the United States.

The first layer would provide a means for officials and agencies to communicate with each other and coordinate their anti-terrorism strategies. The second layer would provide all residents of the county with accurate and up-to-date information that would help them prepare for and protect themselves against the ravages of terrorism and other kinds of emergencies.

From a proposal recently submitted to the Office of Legislative Council in Sacramento for inclusion in the "California Internet Bill of Rights" initiative:

Build a Virtual Legislature platform that will allow remote convening of the Assembly and the Senate, and all County Boards of Supervisors, City Councils, and all other official elective and appointive bodies.

These two proposals, from late September, 2001, and February, 2002, would let elected officials and citizens alike use the Internet to distribute timely and authoritative information, and carry on the essential activities of democratic government from anywhere there was Internet access, even in the face of horrendous disruptions of the locations where the government normally carries on its work.

One could even make the case that by allowing elected officials to carry on their representative work from the districts that elected them, they would be in a better position to judge the needs and situation of their constituents vis a vis any emergencies then pending. Certainly, they would have a stronger incentive to preserve and protect the lives, property, and livelihoods of those they are charged to serve if they were living among them everyday.

The same reasoning, of course, also applies to non-elected government bureaucrats and the operation of their bureaucracies. While I have been arguing for years that the "deep automation" of government agencies and a much wider use of telecommuting for government workers would increase efficiency, cut costs, and upgrade service levels in normal times, when you add in the benefit of scattering and decentralizing agencies in the age of terrorism, so that everything that can be put in cyberspace is and the few workers still required to monitor and supervise the cybergovernment are allowed to access agency servers remotely from home or elsewhere, you can see that the arguments for following this approach are virtually irrefutable.

Compare this vision of increased efficiency and greater security with what the Bush Administration has decided to do to protect the government in case of attack.

Read the article in the Washington Post that broke the story:

Shadow Government Is at Work in Secret
After Attacks, Bush Ordered 100 Officials to Bunkers Away From Capital
to Ensure Federal Survival

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A20584-2002Feb28.html>

Read how President Bush kept Congress in the Dark about the Shadow Government:

Congress Not Advised Of Shadow Government
Bush Calls Security 'Serious Business'

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26212-2002Mar1.html>

Get a capsule version of the story from Washington Post reporter Susan Schmidt, on video:

Shadow Govt. Bunkered Down
Friday, March 1, 2002

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/politics/030102-11v.htm>

In sum, President Bush, rather than using the Internet to decentralize, democratize, and protect the government, has ordered top officials underground, as in the black comedy "Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb," where they, but no one, else can be "safe" when the country comes under attack.

One report yesterday indicated that the bunkers where the bureaucrats are hunkered down are equipped with extremely out-of-date computer systems. This could conceivably mean that they can't even do productive work while they're there, and may be reduced to doing nothing other than generic hunkering down.

At least the bureaucrat-cave dwellers in Dr. Strangelove could look forward to spending time repopulating the Earth with a wide selection of attractive celebrities. Given that day-to-day rules down in the bureau-bunkers would probably be set by the U.S. Justice Department, in whose above-ground office building bare-breasted statues were recently ordered covered for the sake of decency, its not likely that they will even have that diversion to console them.

And while everyone has to appreciate the benefits that would accrue if the surviving bunkerpeople where to keep the power grid up, protect the water supply, and make sure Amtrak trains ran on time (even if they hadn't before the attack), one has only to recall such made-for-television movies as "The Day After" and "Alas, Babylon" (go to: <http://www.lostbooks.org/guestreviews/1999-08-17-1.html> for a prescient review of the book version of this story) or use some common

sense to realize that no "successor government" to whichever one couldn't prevent a nuclear attack on Washington, DC, is going to receive much allegiance from the survivors, wherever they are, absent the effective presence of armed force, which is, of course, a far broader issue than we can address here.

In the second article, a member of Congress raises the issue of protecting branches other than the executive in case of disaster:

"There are two other branches of government that are central to the functioning of our democracy," said Rep. William Delahunt (D-Mass.), a member of the House Judiciary Committee. "I would hope the speaker and the minority leader would at least pose the question, 'What about us?'"

In addition to the very real and natural desire not to be left behind in a radioactive capital, Rep. Delahunt's expression of hope also reflects why an e-Congress would be such a good idea.

If members of Congress were living in their districts all over the country, no single terrorist weapon of mass destruction could wipe them all out, as it could if they were all present in the Capitol and/or their nearby offices.

So if the national security planners are really serious about protecting us by protecting our representatives and their ability to function in the event of a terrorist attack, they ought to start today to build an e-legislature platform for the House and Senate and use it to disperse our representatives out into the country as soon as possible.

This is not such a startling suggestion. The Internet was on the brink of totally deconstructing, disintermediating, and destroying the multi-billion dollar music industry through Napster and other peer-to-peer systems. It still might. The Internet allows overcharged Americans to buy pharmaceuticals from Canadian websites and save half the cost they'd have to pay in the US.

The Internet has just begun to have an impact on these and many other established institutions, due to its ability to take time and place out financial calculations, to aggregate, communicate, coordinate, and disintermediate.

There's no reason other than lack of imagination why the problem of surviving terrorist attacks cannot be successfully addressed by a technology that originated as a means of surviving distributed attacks against the US by nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.

What's good enough for the Washington goose, by the way, ought to be good enough for the ganders of the several states and any city large enough to be considered a target as well. If Members of Congress and U.S. Senators are worth protecting, so are State Assemblymembers and State Senators, Constitutional Officers in each state, heads of agencies, everyone else in state and federal agencies, members of city councils, heads of city departments, everyone else in city

departments, and, hey, everyone who commutes to work in high-rise, densely-packed, highly-vulnerable office buildings.

Even voting would be safer if it were done by voters from their homes over the Internet, eliminating the need for citizens to congregate in a single spot where they would be more vulnerable to terrorist attack.

If the stock traders and other information workers concentrated in the World Trade Center had all been at home doing their screen work and been scattered over hundreds of square miles throughout the Tri-State area on September 9th, no plan, however diabolical, fanatic, or cruel, would have been able to brutally slaughter them at a single stroke.

It's the concentration of money, power, information, and the people wielding them in a single place that makes that place an attractive target to evildoers eager to wreak havoc against a nation, a people, or a way of life. The Internet has the power to let us disperse ourselves, our activities, and our organizations as diffusely as we choose, and let workers, artists, elected officials, and almost everyone else "phone it in" from any place the Internet is available or can be made available, which is, really, anywhere.

If we are serious about protecting ourselves from horrific attacks on our persons and our institutions and about making sure essential functions will survive the attacks that aren't prevented, while at the same time enhancing the inclusiveness, efficiency, and convenience with which these institutions function even in the absence of any attack at all, we should give serious consideration to building e-legislatures, e-bureaucracies, and a lot more dispersed e-organizations of all kinds.

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue Mar 5, 2002 12:29 pm

Subject: Shadow Elections, CIBR Article, New Subscriptions, California Primary

Dear EuronacUEE subscriber,

I am now an "Authorized Finder" for SafeVote, Inc., the world's leading remote Internet voting company.

Our current strategy calls for performing one or more "shadow remote Internet voting" elections in jurisdictions where normal voting will be augmented by a "shadow" Internet vote that won't count officially at all, but will provide an opportunity for voters to try it out, hackers to try to break it, and election officials and media observers to see how great it works (or doesn't).

Instead of the \$3.00 to \$5.00 cost per voter of the "non-shadow" election, these "shadow remote Internet voting" tests will cost between \$.50 and \$.20 per voter, depending on a number of factors. That means the "shadow" vote will cost between one-sixth and one twenty-fifth of normal elections, on a per-voter basis.

I'm writing to find out if you can help us find the jurisdictions most suited for hosting these tests. The ideal district will have plenty of money now but a shrinking budget, outmoded election equipment, a lot of Internet-oriented voters, and open-minded and innovative election officials and staff. These voting districts can be anywhere. They can include candidates for dogcatcher or be special elections to fill empty gubernatorial or senatorial positions, at level of electing local councilmembers, members of parliament or heads of government.

Given the dynamics of the situation, earlier elections are much better than later ones.

If you and/or your organization would like to share in the bountiful profits we expect to harvest from these shadow elections, I'd be glad to do what I can to arrange for that, within the tight financial constraints already hemming in this project.

You can contact me with likely prospects at etopia@pacificnet.net.

Thanks in advance for giving this proposal some consideration.

Alan Kotok, a leading technojournalist, has written an article about the California Internet Bill of Rights, which was also the subject of a February 20, 2002, post on this list. You can access his article at:

<http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/10818/89924>

If you have friends or associates that might want to join this list, please tell them they can subscribe by sending an empty e-mail to:

EuronaCUEE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

The big Spring Primary is underway today here in California. Maybe it will mean we are closer to getting elected officials who will understand and appreciate the need for more modern elections, including report Internet voting.

A measure on the ballot, Proposition 41, would allow the State of California to sell \$200 million in bonds to raise money to buy new election equipment.
(<http://voterguide.ss.ca.gov/propositions2.asp?id=221>) Maybe some of that will go for remote Internet voting.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed Mar 6, 2002 5:47 pm

Subject: H.R. 3481

Dear EuronacUEE subscriber,

Here is a copy of a bill, now pending in the United States House of Representatives, that would launch a study of secure remote voting for Members of Congress. It would make possible my own suggested re-deployment of legislators back to their districts. If you'd like to help get this bill for a preliminary study passed, please let me know at etopia@pacificnet.net.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

Ensuring Congressional Security and Continuity Act (Introduced in the House)
HR 3481 IH

107th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. R. 3481

To require the National Institute of Standards and Technology to investigate the feasibility and costs of implementing a secure computer system for remote voting and communication for the Congress and establishing a system to ensure business continuity for congressional operations.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 13, 2001

Mr. LANGEVIN (for himself, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SANDLIN, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. WYNN, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mrs. THURMAN, and Mr. LIPINSKI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Science, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the National Institute of Standards and Technology to

investigate the feasibility and costs of implementing a secure computer system for remote voting and communication for the Congress and establishing a system to ensure business continuity for congressional operations.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the `Ensuring Congressional Security and Continuity Act'.

SEC. 2. REMOTE VOTING, COMMUNICATION, AND CONTINUITY SYSTEMS FOR CONGRESS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the National Institute of Standards and Technology shall transmit to the Congress a report on the results of an investigation by the National Institute of Standards and Technology of the feasibility and costs of?

(1)
implementing a secure system for remote voting and communication for Members of the Congress if circumstances require the Congress to convene without being at a single location; and

(2) establishing a system to ensure business continuity in circumstances where Members of Congress and their staff cannot access their offices in Washington, D.C.

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Mar 8, 2002 6:16 pm

Subject: Bill Jones on Privacy, in Theory and in Practice

Dear EuronacUEE subscriber,

California Secretary of State Bill Jones
California Internet Voting Task Force
A Report on the Feasibility of Internet Voting
January, 2000

Internet Voting Report

At this time, it would not be legally, practically or fiscally feasible to develop a comprehensive remote Internet voting system that would completely replace the current paper process used for voter registration, voting, and the collection of initiative, referendum and recall petition signatures.

To achieve the goal of providing voters with the opportunity to cast their ballots at any time from any place via the Internet, this task force believes that the elections process would be best served by a strategy of evolutionary rather than revolutionary change.

As with most computer systems, increased security and higher levels of privacy can be provided by increasing the complexity and the burden on the user of the system. The success or failure of Internet voting in the near-term may well depend on the ability of computer programmers and election officials to design a system where the burden of the additional duties placed on voters does not outweigh the benefits derived from the increased flexibility provided by the Internet voting system.

For the full report:

http://www.ss.ca.gov/executive/ivote/final_report.htm#final-2

To see how much ?higher levels of privacy? really mean to the man who issued this report, see below:

CANDIDATE'S WEB SITE YANKED AFTER CAMPAIGN SPAMS THE PUBLIC
(Sacramento Bee) We told you last week about how California gubernatorial candidate, Bill Jones spammed the public yet again in the hopes of getting those last minute votes in "California Candidate Spams Again," well the story didn't end there. Secretary of State Bill Jones' struggling campaign had its Web page shut down last by their ISP Friday before the elections following accusations that it

sent at least a million unsolicited e-mail messages in a last-ditch effort to reach voters.

<http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/story/1738515p-1818349c.html>

If you missed last week's story... <http://www.msnbc.com/news/717459.asp>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Mar 8, 2002 7:02 pm

Subject: Mark Guest's Views on the Future of Democracy

Dear EuronacUEE subscriber,

The text below comes from Mark Guest, who posted it at a recent "virtual think tank" conference run by Headstar.com (find them at: <http://www.headstar.com/index.html>).

It's all about political disintermediation by means of the Internet.

Democracy is one of the areas where the Information Age will have a profound effect. This is because real choice will be enabled by freely available information, as opposed to the limited choice provided by the information available from a few political parties with the resources to effectively market themselves. Here's a piece I wrote a few years ago on the subject. It looks at which technology will eventually achieve without getting bogged down by what's available right now. any opinions?:-

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

The Information Age is going to have a profound effect on democracy and how we are governed. To start to understand this, imagine a scene some time in the future, an average home, such as yours. You have become used to doing everything with one click. Your "media interface" informs you that there is an election. You're curious. One click tells you what the election is for. One more click tells you who the candidates are. You're curious about them, as you now know exactly how they will affect your everyday life. One click tells you the information about them that they want you to know. You're still curious and now it just takes one more click to find out the information that everyone else wants you to know about them. In a very short time you're going to know all about these people and the office they are hoping to be voted into, and with minimal effort. All of the information that you want will have been filtered out from the mass of information that you don't want e.g. information on candidates standing in other elections. By now, the chances are that you are going to have an opinion on who should hold that office, either on whom you want to hold it, or more likely on whom you don't want to hold it. Whichever way, you will have an opinion, possibly a strong one, and you will want to register it. One click, and you just have.

In the future, anyone will be able to publish information on electoral candidates that will easily find its way to those who want and need to know; no one will be safe from that skeleton in the closet coming back to haunt them. Candidates will be immediately responsible for all of their past actions, no matter how minor or isolated, and the actions

that the electorate will judge on will be those relevant to how well that candidate will representative them. The political game will have been turned around from the current situation, whereby political office is predominantly attained by service to the political party in return for a 'safe seat', as opposed to service to the electorate. There will be real, and possibly absolute, accountability to the electorate. The skills and personalities required to succeed when the aim is to climb a political party's career ladder, may well be entirely the wrong skills in an environment which judges the individuals ability to serve as opposed to the ability to do deals.

This is the future of democracy as enabled by the Information Age. It involves the electorate making decisions based on information specifically relevant to how decision-makers have handled decisions affecting their lives. In this scenario, once they start to find out candidates' abilities and histories, it is possible that one of the last issues they are likely to consider is the political party that candidates claim their views are allied to, as they will know the candidates' actual views. They will make decisions based on the person, not the party. The party political system exists as it does today as information does not flow freely, and so has become shaped by parties with the resources to market their information. Marketing is the substitute for access to relevant information upon which people base decisions, and this relies on there not being full freedom of information. The marketeers are able to promote one particular idea to people through expensive marketing techniques, as little other information is getting through. Political parties are little more than a franchise; you adopt our policy and sell yourselves in the way we say, and you can benefit from our mass marketing. This is the way any franchise works, such as hamburgers. Party politics is the Macdonaldisation of democracy. With the power of marketing removed, we might see a whole plethora of independent candidates standing and being elected, as they are they are now judged as individuals against other candidates as individuals, regardless of any party political backing.

The implication is that the Information Age will mean the end of the dominance of a few well-marketed political parties. If this does mean the end, or at least the severe diminishing of political parties, then there are very serious consequences and major upheaval will follow. Our whole system of governance has evolved around the party political system, and without party politics, this system cannot operate in anything like the present way. However, this system has developed as a result of evolution, and evolution means things developing in response to environmental changes. Therefore, governance will evolve if the environment changes. However, it may have to be at an unprecedented rate, and this might be painful.

For such a change to happen to something as institutionalised and deep rooted as our political system, there will need to be a powerful driving force. Looking at some other aspects of the Information Age and the associated technology can give some ideas as to how this might happen. For example, Information Technology will make it possible for the electorate to voice their opinions directly to their candidate. The electorate may increasingly judge candidates on how they have responded to these wider discussions. Once again, the party political system is bypassed and candidates will now have to respond directly to

an electorate, not to a party whip. This will be threatening to many politicians who will see their power to make decisions draining away (although it arguably already rests with the party centre) and so may well resist such a move. However, there is already open access to democracy allowing anyone to stand for election. This could lead to a single candidate standing on a platform of agreeing to directly respond to the opinions of their constituents, which they have registered using Information Technology. This could force the hand of all others to adopt this kind of approach, leading to candidates' success being dependent on how well they listen to and consult with the electorate. With policy being influenced by the electorate frequently registering opinions, once again the only issue in selecting candidates will be the person and how he or she responds to the views of the electorate. The role of the elected candidates moves from being purely a representative making decisions on behalf of others, to ensuring the wider electorate is properly involved in influencing those decisions. Obviously, the future of democracy in the Information Age is a massive area of debate, and the issues here are only the start. What can be concluded though, is that there is every possibility that in a few years, the way in which those who govern us are selected, and maybe even the way in which they govern, will be very different to how it is today.

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Mar 9, 2002 5:56 pm

Subject: Observations on the California Primary, March 5, 2002

Observations on the California Primary,
March 5, 2002

By Marc Strassman
President
Etopia
etopia@pacificnet.net

March 9, 2002

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David M. Anderson, task force director at the Democracy Online Project. (www.democracyonline.org), in a recent op-ed piece ("Clearing hurdles in the path of online voting" [<http://www.dfw.com/mld/startelegram/news/editorial/2636982.html>]) focused on one of the perennial objections to remote Internet voting, the loss of the allegedly "democracy affirming" public ritual of voting with one's neighbors at the local school, church, or library.

Writes Anderson: "A special hurdle is the public ritual hurdle. Some people worry that if we voted online at home or at work, we would lose the crucial "public" dimension of our elections."

Anderson does not think this is an insurmountable hurdle. He goes on to say, "In light of declining voter turnout in American elections, we must ask: Where is the public ritual? Why are so many afraid of losing a vital ritual when it is dead for the vast majority of the public for the vast majority of elections?"

If any further evidence were needed in support of his view, I have some, both anecdotal and statistical.

Last Tuesday, March 5, 2002, California held its primary election, to nominate candidates for statewide and district offices, and to vote on several propositions. I walked a mile or so along a crowded and noisy main thoroughfare here in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles to get to the church housing my assigned polling place, to which location it had been transferred at the last minute in order to consolidate many thinly-attended polling stations into a single sparsely-attended one.

There may have been one other voter there that afternoon. I'm not sure. I do know that in any case there were far more poll workers than voters present. I got my ballot, punched out my chads in about two minutes, and put the finished product into the ballot box. I got

a red-white-and-blue sticker saying I'd voted and then I left.

This was no ritual re-affirmation of the glory of democracy. This was like going to the bank to make a deposit during off-peak hours. If anything, it was a living testimonial to the underwhelming regard in which many California and other voters hold elections.

I walked home in the heat and glare of the California sun along the now even more jammed boulevard. It had taken me forty minutes to engage in two minutes of the democratic process.

I could, of course, have requested an absentee ballot, or signed up for permanent absentee ballot status, and voted by mail. After all, 60% of the voters in Washington State and, since the late 1990s, all the voters in Oregon vote by mail (VBM). So why don't we institute a combined system of secure remote Internet voting and Voting by Mail and let each voter choose the method they prefer to use?

Knowing I can bank, shop, chat, work, watch films, download music, buy stocks, and do almost anything online except vote does not convince that voting is a special thing, but that those in power who won't let us vote online are especially restrictive. This disconnect between what we can do online and what politicians let us do there politically and electorally is becoming more obvious with every improvement in computer and Internet technology and every decline in voter turnout.

Speaking of which, here is the statistical evidence, which tells the same story as my personal voting anecdote, extended across the entire state of California:

REPORT OF REGISTRATION
February 19, 2002

Eligible Voters	Number Registered	Percent Registration
21,507,390	15,280,808	71.05%

Turnout for March 5, 2002, Primary Election

Los Angeles County
Reg'd Voters
Ballots Cast
% Turnout
4,140,740
1,025,832
24.7

California Statewide
Reg'd Voters
Ballots Cast
% Turnout
15,280,808
4,888,586
31.9

For the complete report, go to:

<http://vote2002.ss.ca.gov/Returns/status.htm>

Percent of Eligible Voters Registered	71.05
Percent of Registered Voters Voting	31.9

Percent of Eligible Voters Voting	22.66
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Around one in five of the people eligible to vote in this election

voted. This means that around 10%, or one in ten eligible voters in any district, is enough to pass or defeat a ballot proposition, on which everyone can vote, even though, for example, a bond measure passed this way incurs a financial obligation for every taxpayer, including those who don't vote.

This was a primary election, designed to select party candidates for inter-party races in November. Statewide, registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans 44 to 35, but almost every Assembly and State Senate District has been gerrymandered by the incumbent representatives so that it safely belongs to one party or another. This makes "nomination" in the primary election tantamount to "election" in November in most cases, meaning that around five percent, or one in twenty eligible voters, effectively selects each representative. While this is a broader base than the five Republicans who selected George W. Bush to be President, it is not exactly "government by the people."

Add in the impact of campaign contributions from an even smaller cross-section of corporations and the wealthy, and you have a system so undemocratic that increasing numbers of potential voters want nothing to do with it. This, of course, leaves the process to the tender mercies of the oligarchs, retains democratic rights only for those who can afford them, alienates everyone else, and intensifies the spiral of apathy, withdrawal, thinly-disguised bribery, media access only for special interests, low turnout, and cynicism. This is not a recipe for a vibrant democracy.

These factors are as widely understood as they are ignored by the mainstream analysts. Could this be because the same special interests are paying the analysts and controlling access to the only real means of public discussion: television studios, newspapers, and well-financed mega-websites with hefty promotional budgets?

As Howard Kurtz points out in "The Fortune Tellers," when analysts working for investment banks routinely publicly discuss stocks underwritten by their companies, without disclosing these relationships, they are sometimes more bullish than is otherwise warranted. Or take the case of Enron, where Arthur Anderson, Enron's paid consultant, was in charge of telling investors how well the company was doing. When the "impartial" or "objective" observers are paid by the observed, you sometimes don't get the truth until it's too late.

As with high-flying stocks, so perhaps also with long-running experiments in democracy. If the process designed to steer and modulate the ship of state is given over to the exclusive control of a small clique of self-servers and a retinue of commentators who feed at the same trough, how will we be able to make essential mid-course corrections, avoid dangerous shoals, and continue on course towards our cherished and shared goals, while also enjoying the cruise?

Despite some recent storms, the heavens generally continue to bless us with sunny days and a fair breeze.

But those who've studied nautical history know that these seas we sail always hold the risk of danger, and even of catastrophe. A crew

committed to its own survival knows that ultimately it is only its own cohesion, fortitude, and creativity that can protect it when difficult circumstances arise.

That's how it was for the crew of H.M.S. Bounty. There, a tyrannical captain's insistence on total control drove his men to revolt. This made for real, literary, and cinematic drama, but maybe if decision-making had been a bit more decentralized on board everything might have worked out even better than it did for all concerned.

And everything might work out better for us too, if we the crew had more say in where we're going, how we get there, and whether we can use the newest instruments to navigate with, rather than being forced to use obsolete ones whose ineffectiveness is proven again and again every time they're used.

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed Mar 13, 2002 11:55 am

Subject:

Dear Subscriber,

Attached is a PDF file called, "Remote Internet Voting in California, March 2002." Its purpose is to bring you up-to-date on my efforts to make it legal for citizens in California to vote securely over the Internet. Those of you in other jurisdictions may find it useful or entertaining or edifying as well.

If you don't already have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader that you need to read this document, you can download it at:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

[43 Remote Internet Voting in California, March 2002.pdf](#)

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu Mar 14, 2002 3:11 pm

Subject: Questions for California Secretary of State Candidate Kevin Shelley

Dear Subscriber,

If you've read my recent "Remote Internet Voting in California, March, 2002," you'll have seen how Bill Jones, in his role as California's Secretary of State and chief elections officer, did more than anyone else to stifle, delay, and thwart the movement for remote Internet voting from the time I wrote the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative in 1996 up to the present time.

But now Bill Jones is a lame duck, having been trounced in his run for Governor of California. On January 1, 2003, a new Secretary of State will take office in Sacramento, and whoever is elected will be able to exert a similar level of influence on the ongoing debate about remote Internet voting, pro or con.

I believe that the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State, California State Assembly Majority Leader, will most likely win that race. On the basis of his previous efforts to modernize California's voting systems, I further believe that he is as likely as anyone to foster remote Internet voting in the state and, by example, everywhere else.

To gauge Mr. Shelley's current views on this issue, I contacted the Press Office of his campaign (<http://www.shelley2002.com/>) and proposed that I interview him about it. Since he's a busy candidate, I suggested that I prepare a set of written questions and submit them for him to answer at his convenience. His Press Secretary agreed.

I prepared ten questions on remote Internet voting and e-mailed them to his office yesterday. While I wait for the answers, I thought I'd send you a copy.

If possible, I'd like those of you who support the earliest possible implementation of secure remote Internet voting systems in California and elsewhere to contact Mr. Shelley also, during his campaign for Secretary of State and, if he's elected, as he settles into his new job, to ask him about his plans for remote Internet voting and to encourage him to move forward expeditiously to develop standards for

certifying remote Internet voting systems, to certify those systems that meet those standards, and to do all he can to put these certified remote Internet voting systems into operation throughout the state.

When I get his answers to these questions, you'll be the first to know.

The questions are included below and also attached as a PDF file.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

Hi Josh,

Here's what I'd like to ask Mr. Shelley:

1. In the Assembly, you were the most forward-thinking and the most active Member in support of voting modernization. How will you follow through on that commitment as Secretary of State?

2. How far, how fast and under what terms and conditions do you intend to pursue remote Internet voting options for California voters?

3. Federal Judge Wilson ruled on February 14, 2002, that the nine California counties still using pre-scored punch cards for voting would have to stop using them, and replace them with another certified voting method, by March 2004. It's been suggested that even with the funds derived from Proposition 41 (\$200 million), there still won't be enough money to provide the necessary number of touch-screen computers to meet the requirements statewide, and, in any case, the lead time for evaluating, purchasing, and installing these systems is too long to get them in place in time to meet Judge Wilson's deadline.

It's been further suggested that one way to deal with this dilemma (required replacement by a time certain and insufficient time and funds to do so) would be to employ remote Internet voting systems to take up some (or most) of the slack. By letting those who chose to do so vote online remotely, the required number of expensive, use-once, store-for-a-year touch-screen systems could be drastically reduced, saving both money and time and making it possible to meet the deadline.

Of course, there are as of yet no certified remote Internet voting systems.

If you were elected and took office in January 2003, do you think you could, and would you, expedite the development of certification standards and the certifications themselves, to make it possible to use remote Internet voting systems as a partial solution to the dilemma created by Judge Wilson's ruling?

4. Thirty-one point nine per cent of registered voters voted in the Primary Election on March 5th. Only 71 per cent of eligible voters were registered. This means 22.66 per cent of eligible voters voted, which further means that around ten percent, or one out of ten eligible voters, decided propositions and nominations for high elective office. Actually, in cases where party registration is fairly close between Democrats and Republicans, this means that nominations in any particular party could have been decided by one out of twenty eligible voters.

Is this democracy? Should we just leave the non-voters alone? Do you have an interest in and/or plans to do anything about these low turnout rates?

5. The incumbent Secretary of State, Bill Jones, convened an Internet Voting Task Force that issued its final report in January 2000. It declared, essentially, that remote Internet voting was a non-starter, that the Internet might be used solely to collect votes at controlled polling places, and that if remote Internet voting were ever approved, voters would need to go through a lot of non-electronic red tape to avail themselves of this technology. In the words of the Task Forces Final Report:

If remote Internet voting is eventually adopted, this task force believes that current technology requires that it initially be modeled on the current absentee ballot process in California. Although the procedures used to request an Internet ballot in this model would be more cumbersome than traditional e-commerce transactions, it is the only way to tie the authentication of voters from the existing paper voter registration system to the electronic arena at this time.

We believe that additional technical innovations are necessary before remote Internet voting can be widely implemented as a useful tool to improve participation in the elections process in California. However, current technology would allow for the implementation of new voting systems that would allow voters to cast a ballot over the Internet from a computer at any one of a number of county-controlled polling places in a county.

If you're elected Secretary of State, under what conditions, if any, would you re-constitute this or a similar Task Force? Or do you feel you have enough information and enough authority to certify remote Internet voting systems without doing so?

6. In 2000 a proposed statewide initiative, called the "Smart Initiatives Initiative," was circulated. It would have made it legal for initiative and other official petitions to be signed digitally by registered voters over the Internet, in addition to the legacy pen-on-paper method, thereby drastically reducing the cost to circulators, time needed for circulation, and expense and time required for election officials to authenticate the signatures. Such a system would, of course, required the expenditure of a certain amount of money to create the necessary Certificate Authority and distribute and manage the millions of certificates required to make the system work. However, spending public money to create and operate the Certificate Authority would also simultaneously empower all those now holding the certificates to engage in a wide range of additional secure online transactions, in both the public and private sectors.

(for more on this, see: "Jump-Starting the Digital Economy (with Department of Motor Vehicles-Issued Digital Certificates)," at:
http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?contentid=1369&knlgAreaID=107&subsecid=126)

Do you support Smart Initiatives? Would you be willing to work with the DMV and other state agencies to put such a system of universal digital authentication in place within the State and to pursue the necessary legislation to legalize digital signing of initiative and other official petitions?

7. What do you think about using a combination of remote Internet voting and mail-in ballots (as in Oregon) a way of lowering costs, increasing turn-out, assuring security and integrity, and providing both an electronic and a non-electronic choice for every voter?

8. Here are the major criticisms raised against remote Internet voting:

1. Lack of security means results can be compromised.
2. Digital divide denies equal protection of the laws to those disenfranchised due to lack of Internet access.
3. Absence of a publicly-shared civic event at the polls undermines community and the democratic process.

Do you believe that these criticisms have merit? How would you refute these arguments to the extent you

don't believe they are valid and/or mitigate them to the extent that you believe they are?

Do you think they are sufficient, individually or collectively, to preclude the introduction and use of remote Internet voting?

9. What is your overall vision of how the Internet and other advanced technologies can and would be used in your administration to enhance the democratic process in California while improving security, efficiency, and accountability, and lowering the total cost to taxpayers?

10. How are you using the Internet in your campaign to be elected Secretary of State so you'll be in a position to make these reforms?

Thanks very much for answering these questions.

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon Mar 18, 2002 3:46 pm

Subject: Broadband Access Lagging in EU, Democratic Participation Proposed for UK

Dear subscriber,

Here are two links that may be of interest.

This article from the BBC reviews the slow rate at which the European Union is rolling out broadband Internet access and discusses the implication of this problem for the super-state's economic and educational competitiveness.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_1866000/1866980.stm

This article features a proposal by Graham Allen, a member of the UK parliament, to use the Internet to more fully involve British citizens in the formulation and evaluation of Parliamentary legislation.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/internetnews/story/0,7369,666101,00.html>

Maybe U.S. Congressmembers and Senators, and state legislators as well, should take a look at Mr. Allen's proposal, so that someone other than lobbyists and big contributors could have input into the making of laws in Washington and the 50 states.

Maybe it would be worth looking into in every other democracy as well.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Mar 22, 2002 3:13 pm

Subject: A Talk with Candidate Kevin Shelley About Voting, Internet and Otherwise, in CA

Dear Subscriber,

About a week ago (on March 14th), I sent you a copy of the questions I intended to ask Kevin Shelley, Majority Leader in the California Assembly and the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State of California.

Two days ago, I asked him these and related questions. Yesterday I assembled his answers into an article, and today I'm sending you a copy of it.

I hope you enjoy reading the positions of the man who is likely to elected chief elections officer of California on November 5, 2002, and then to take office on January 1, 2003. Given California's dominant position (economically, politically, culturally) within the American Union, what happens here carries tremendous weight elsewhere.

So staying informed about remote Internet voting in California, and letting public officials like Mr. Shelley know how you feel about using the latest technology to make democracy more accessible are both extremely important in the effort to use the Internet as a means of reforming, improving, and expanding democracy.

I hope you will all do so by sending me any additional questions these generate in your mind for me to pose to Mr. Shelley in our next conversation.

You can also contribute to this effort by urging those of your acquaintances who share your interest in democratic reform through Internet power to subscribe to this weblist by sending an empty e-mail from the address they want to register with to:

EuronaCUEE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Have a nice week-end, everyone.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

A Talk with Candidate Kevin Shelley About Voting,
Internet and Otherwise, in California

By Marc Strassman
President
Etopia
etopia@pacificnet.net

March 22, 2002

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Like the legendary weather in Vermont, one good thing about a democratic political system, especially one with term limits, or a lot of ambitious politicians wanting to move up, is that if you don't like the slate of officeholders in power at any particular time, if you just wait a while, it will change.

This has never been truer, or more significant, than now in California, at least in terms of who is Secretary of State. Bill Jones has been California's Secretary of State since 1994 and while I'm sure it wasn't his highest priority (he often said that removing "deadwood" from the voting rolls was his highest priority), he has been the strongest, most cunning, and most relentless opponent of remote Internet voting in the state. Given his position as chief elections officer for California, he has been very successful in turning back the tide of electronic distance voting.

This year, Bill Jones ran for governor, and lost. In November 2002, a new Secretary of State will be elected. The odds-on favorite to win that election is Kevin Shelley, who, on the strength of his recent victory in the Democratic primary, is now that party's nominee for the office. Shelley is a Member of the California Assembly, and serves as the Majority Leader.

In recent years, he has authored and, in some cases, passed, several bills to modernize California's election systems. He also authored Proposition 41, which passed on March 5th, and which will provide \$200 million in bond revenues to finance the modernization of the state's voting equipment.

Yesterday (March 20th), Mr. Shelley took time out from his busy campaign for Secretary of State to answer some of my questions about voting in California. I was talking to him from my home office near Studio City, California, while he enjoyed a pleasant walk on what he said was "a beautiful day in San Francisco" and answered my questions through his cel phone.

We started by discussing the abysmally low turnout in the March 5th election, the one where Shelley was nominated as the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State. Only 22 per cent of eligible voters, statewide, voted in that election. Shelley gave me some statistics from previous elections, to put the turnout in this one into context.

"In 1940," he told me, "80% of eligible Californians voted. In 1960,

70% of eligible voters voted. In 2000, 50% of eligible voters voted. In 2000, 20% of 18 to 24-year-olds voted."

I said that this was not a very impressive record, or trend line, and asked him why he thought turnout was shrinking so drastically.

"We spend a lot of effort teaching people to recycle, to not smoke, and to wear their seat belts," he said, "but we don't spend comparable energy urging them to vote."

I noted that some form of coercion, up to legal sanctions, now accompany all the behaviors he cited as being successfully inculcated in people. Even before I could ask about legally requiring people to vote, as is the case in several countries, he emphatically declared: "I don't support mandatory voting."

"But," he said, "encouraging students to vote needs to be a greater priority of our educational system."

He had specific ideas about how to do this:

1.
Create a Youth Voting Corps (on the model of the Civilian Conservation Corps) and deputize its members to register their peers.
2.
Give school credit for registering voters.
3.
Include a voter registration form with every high school diploma and every citizenship certificate.

We talked about AB55, Shelley's bill to modernize voting in California. It has, he said, gone all the way through the Assembly and all the policy committees in the state Senate and is pending in the Senate Appropriations committee. When it passes, it will provide additional funding for voting equipment in the state.

He said it would cost \$375 million to provide touch screen systems for every county. He said that with \$108 million from the federal government (\$6,000 per precinct still using punch cards) and \$267 million generated internally in California (\$200 million from Proposition 41 and \$67 million from the counties, on a 3-1 matching basis), the money could be found to pay for the necessary upgrades.

Shelley also authored a bill to legalize permanent absentee voting, with no requirements other than wanting to vote that way. He said thousands of people across the state were applying for this status and that up to a million voters would be voting this way for the first time in November 2002. He said it could increase total turnout by five to ten percent.

I suggested that it wasn't only inconvenience that kept people from voting, that sometimes it was a sign of people's alienation from the political system

"It's both," said Shelley. "Inconvenience AND disillusion about

politics."

We began discussing Internet voting.

Shelley had written and passed a bill to try out polling place Internet voting in three counties. Governor Gray Davis vetoed the bill. Shelley still strongly supports what he calls "stage two" Internet voting, or voting over the Internet from terminals in official polling places.

He's not ready for "stage four" Internet voting, what he calls "pajama voting," in which voters vote from home, office, or wherever they can securely access the Internet. "Digital divide issues are huge," he said. "Conservatives," he said, oppose remote Internet voting because "they don't trust the system and suspect fraud," while many on the left oppose it "because they worry about excluding minorities and the poor."

As Secretary of State, said Shelley, he would focus on the essential "intangible function" of being an "active, aggressive spokesperson." He also said he would do more to more fully staff up Secretary of State offices around the state.

His priorities, he said, would be:

Voter registration

Youth Voting Corps

New uses of technology in performing the functions of the Secretary of State's office

Right before his staff put an end to his idyllic saunter through the City by the Bay and called him back to the campaign car for a trip to his next appearance, I asked him about Smart Initiatives, certainly a new use of technology to perform the functions associated with the now very expensive and exclusive initiative qualification process. Smart Initiatives involve providing all citizens with digital certificates that they can use to digitally sign initiative petitions, perhaps on a website maintained by the Secretary of State.

"I love the idea in concept," he told me.

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From: AlanKotok@cs.com

Date: Sat Mar 23, 2002 4:22 pm

Subject: Re: [EuronaCUEE] Safevote, Inc.

In 2000, the Arizona Democratic presidential primary, a binding vote, was conducted by Internet, either from home terminals (after registration) or at kiosks at polling places. Even though Al Gore had by that time had the nomination pretty well in hand, Arizona Democrats experienced a large increase in turnout from 1996. To be fair, however, Bill Clinton had no opposition for the nomination in 1996.

Alan Kotok

AlanKotok@cs.com

<http://www.technewslit.com/>

Editor, <E*Business*Standards Today/>, <http://www.disa.org/dailywire/>

Editor, Techno-Politics, http://www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/us_techno_politics

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Mar 29, 2002 5:31 pm

Subject: Secession Without New Forms of Self-Governance is a Waste of Time

Dear Subscriber,

On November 5, 2002, the voters of the City of Los Angeles will probably be able to decide on the secession of two, and possibly three, parts of that sprawling city. The San Fernando Valley, with more than a million residents, the City of Hollywood, according to one resident "the most famous place in the world," and a part of the city near the Harbor have all had movements for secession from Los Angeles, and, if the state agency called the "Local Agency Formation Commission" (LAFCO) gives the go-ahead, voters will be invited to decide their jurisdictional fates in the General Election in November.

This seems to me like a tremendous opportunity to re-think how cities are governed, both in the possible new cities and in what will be left of the City of Los Angeles if some or all of the secession movements succeed. I know I'd like to see serious consideration given to such ideas as remote and polling place Internet voting, Smart Initiatives, e-legislatures, and advanced versions of intensive and ubiquitous e-government, including wide use of kiosks for all these functions, as these new cities come into existence.

It further seems to me that having these discussions could seriously contribute to the overall municipal conversation about breaking up the City and might even make the prospect of creating a new city, with a new way of running itself and responding to the will of its residents, significantly more attractive, thus pushing voters in the direction of voting for secession.

This view is apparently not shared by the top leaders of the movements for secession of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Hollywood, as you'll see in the article below:

Secession Without New Forms of Self-Governance is a Waste of Time

By Marc Strassman
President
Etopia
etopia@pacificnet.net

March 29, 2002

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One of the main reasons why there is a secession movement at all is

that many city residents believe that the city has been poorly governed, leading to the substantive abuses and issues that now motivate their secession efforts.

So one would think that considering, vigorously debating, and planning for governance in the possible new cities of The Valley, Hollywood, and Harbor would be near the top of the agenda for the groups leading the drive for secession. Apparently not.

After today's Hollywood VOTE meeting, I tried to raise this point with Gene LaPietra, the leader of the group. He was rather miffed that I did, and denounced my suggestion about making sure the mistakes made by the City of Los Angeles were not repeated in the new city of Hollywood as "too complicated, too deep, and too intellectual."

The leader of Valley VOTE, Jeff Brain, who attended the meeting and addressed it, was no more responsive to my concern that, unless issues of democratic self-governance for the Valley as a city were addressed as part of the secession campaign, we Valley residents would end up living in a city as badly managed and as undemocratically governed as the one we live in already, thereby rendering the expense and effort needed to conduct and win a campaign for secession an ironic waste of time and energy.

I told LaPietra that the Bolsheviks also had big plans for helping the oppressed masses in their country once they took over, and that they hadn't given much thought to how they would provide for democratic self-governance once they'd succeeded. Things turned out so badly in terms of governance in the Soviet Union, in fact, that one-time Communist Eric Blair, writing under the pen name George Orwell, used the course of events there as the basis for his allegorical novel *Animal Farm*.

In that story, the pigs lead a revolution to replace the brutal human farmers, who make them work very hard under overly-strenuous conditions in exchange for small rations, or, put another way, don't deliver the level of barnyard services that they feel they are entitled to for the amount of work they do. Under the leadership of the pigs, the animals take control of the farm, but, soon, a new and worse dictatorship of the pigs is installed.

In the last scene of the book, the common animals, watching the pigs at a self-congratulatory dinner, where they are exchanging lengthy and drunken toasts with human farmers, look back and forth between the pigs and the farmers, and find it impossible to tell the difference between the two.

If the residents of the City of Los Angeles are going to spend seven months, 10 million dollars, and no end of newsprint, television time, and Internet chat about splitting the city up, it certainly behooves us to take a serious, blank-page look at how the Valley, Hollywood, and Harbor are going to be governed.

And it wouldn't hurt if a similar effort were undertaken to revise the way the residents of what will be left of Los Angeles govern themselves as well, in the wake of the City's possible dismemberment, which will, despite the benefits it will render to the Remnant City in

the long run, probably be seen in the short run as a stinging defeat for ?The City? and the politicians who will have led it to the seeming catastrophe of its dismantling.

Otherwise, we will end up with three mini-clones of the original city, with self-serving, careerist, special-interest-owned officials and bureaucrats merely aping the behavior of their counterparts on today's city council and bureaucracy.

The usual turnout in city elections recently has been less than 20%. The new City Charter was approved in an election involving around 18% of the registered voters, therefore around 13% of eligible voters, meaning the City's new constitution was adopted by fewer than one out of ten eligible citizens.

This is not democracy, whatever it calls itself.

If the basis of secession is to be the right of people and areas to determine their own destiny, free of the control of distant and unresponsive elected "representatives" and their bureaucratic minions, then we need to have a discussion now, before secession, about the means and procedures according to which we will avoid following in their footsteps.

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun Apr 14, 2002 8:17 pm

Subject: New Thinking for a New City

Dear Subscriber,

As recent events in Venezuela have clearly shown, governmental regimes come and go, sometimes over the space of a few hours. Complete transformations of the constitutional order, however, are much less common. Usually, for the replacement of the legal order in some territory, it takes a revolution (Russia changed to the core element in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), an invasion (the Napoleonic Wars), a coup (numerous), or a colonial uprising (the United States, and most of Latin America and Africa).

Another means of establishing a new form of government in a geographical space is secession. This was the method employed by the Confederate States of America (CSA), which adopted a modified version of the United States Constitution to govern its affairs during the few years when it was in rebellion against the United States. Secession is, in general, the approach adopted by the inhabitants of a part of an existing political entity who find that their cultural, economic, or political interests are suffering due to their subjugation by the political entity to which they currently belong.

The possibility of this process actually leading to the fragmentation of an existing and, in this case, well-known, political jurisdiction has now surfaced on the western edge of the United States, in that country's second largest city, Los Angeles. Citizen activists in the Harbor area, the Hollywood area, and the San Fernando Valley, an internal suburb with more than a million residents, have been working for years to break away from the City of Los Angeles, on the basis of numerous complaints, mostly reducible to one that is often also the primary underlying source of domestic, not just municipal, break-ups; and that is neglect.

If the state-run Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) goes ahead as expected, there will be an election on November 5, 2002, to decide if these areas will be allowed to secede. If half the voters voting citywide express themselves in favor of secession for a particular area, then each area where half the voters there also vote to secede will become separate

cities.

I've lived in the San Fernando Valley for most of the last 50 years, and I live there now. Along with the plebiscite on secession itself, on November 5th the voters of each possibly-seceding area will be asked to elect a mayor and, in the case of the San Fernando Valley, 14 councilmembers. These elected officials will, of course, take office only if the secession vote is favorable.

I've decided to run for one of these council seats, in the 14th District, where I live, so I can work to implement the policies of Internet-based e-government and e-democracy, sustainable energy and transportation policies, and participatory government I've been advocating over the last few years.

As a subscriber to one or more of the mailing lists dedicated to discussion of these issues, regardless of where you live, I'm sending you, as a PDF attachment, a copy of the press release announcing my entry into this race. I encourage you, if you want to see these policies implemented sooner rather than later, to do what you can and want to to help me get elected.

You can help, from wherever you are, by:

1. finding journalists and news media and encouraging them to cover my campaign
2. sending your ideas, commends, criticisms and suggestions about the content and the conduct of this effort to me, at etopia@pacificnet.net).
3. sending financial contributions to fund the campaign (if you want to do that, contact us at etopia@pacificnet.net and we'll arrange the details).

I hope this campaign will be educational for all, an encouragement for those seeking similar changes in their own cities and countries, and a success on the ground in Los Angeles. No place in the world needs new thinking more than we do here, and no place is more suitably located to benefit from it than the Valley City we intend to build in our own backyards.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

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From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Apr 20, 2002 10:22 pm

Subject: If Cities Can Provide and Pay for Sanitation, Streets, Water and Power and Police Protection, Why Can't They Do the Same for Internet Service for their Residents?

Dear Subscriber,

Attached is a PDF file containing the first "Virtual White Paper" of my campaign for City Council in Valley City. It suggests some approaches for achieving ubiquitous broadband Internet connectivity for all residents and businesses within the jurisdiction. Everyone talks about the Digital Divide, but here are some suggestions for eliminating it, at least in Valley City. Other jurisdictions are, as always, encouraged to consider adopting these suggestions for the benefit of their own residents and businesses.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President, Etopia
Council Candidate, 14th District
Valley City, California
US

[51 "New Thinking for a New City" "New Thinking for a New City".pdf](#)

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2002 1:43 am

Subject: Adelphia's Troubles May Pave the Way for the Los Angeles Cable Co-op

Dear Subscriber,

Recent developments have opened up an opportunity to create a Los Angeles Cable Co-op that would put subscribers, not faraway corporate oligarchies, in charge of their own telecommunications future.

The story thus far:

Early 1970s While cable takes off nationally, residents of up-scale Bay Area city Palo Alto are polled about their cable needs and claim not to be watching much television, so the city declines to install any cable at that time.

Early 1980s With the rise of PBS, Palo Altans are now ready to admit they watch a little television. Palo Alto City Council launches cable-franchising process to get its residents the best possible system.

1981 Cable Communications Cooperative of Palo Alto, Inc. is incorporated with the intention of creating a user-owned and managed cable system and information utility for the Greater Palo Alto Designated Service Area (Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Stanford University, Menlo Park, and Atherton). Cable Co-op's goal is to protect subscribers from ruthless cost increases and outside control of what they can see.

1981-1985 Palo Alto Cable Co-op competes with Viacom, Pacific Bell, and City Cable Partners, lead by Hewlett-Packard heir Walter Hewlett, to convince the Palo Alto City Council that it should own and run the cable television system in the city.

1985 Cable Co-op wins the Palo Alto cable franchise.

1985-1998 Cable Co-op, chronically undercapitalized, owns and manages cable services in the Greater Palo Alto Area.

1998 TCI, the largest cable owner-operator in the US, buys out Cable Co-op

1999 AT&T, the huge remnant left behind by the court ordered break-up of the monopoly Bell Telephone Company, buys TCI.

2002 AT&T proposes to merge its cable operations with those of Comcast Cable. A Republican US Senator urges the Federal Communications Commission to set limits on cable industry concentration, fearing that, under the emerging cable oligopoly, cable subscribers nationwide will be powerless against ruthless cost increases and outside control of what they can see.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles

1995 The City of Los Angeles grants seven-year-long "non-exclusive" monopoly franchises to various private cable companies in various parts of the city

1995-2001 Takeovers, buyouts, and mergers lead to a shuffling of "musical chairs" for Los Angeles' cable franchisees. By 2002, Adelphia Communications (formerly Century Cable) is providing cable service for most of the residents of the San Fernando Valley who have cable service.

2001 At a meeting about Neighborhood Councils, a staff member of the Los Angeles City Information Technology Agency (ITA) familiar with the history of the Palo Alto Cable Co-op tells me that the LA cable franchises will all expire in 2002. We talk about the possibility of replacing them with a Cable Communications Cooperative of Los Angeles, Inc.

2001 I attend a meeting called by the City of Los Angeles to collect public input on public access cable. I input a suggestion that all the expiring cable franchises in the city should be converted to a single publicly-owned-and-run cable cooperative. My suggestion is duly noted on a sheet of "brainstorming" paper while I am told privately by ITA staff that the incumbent franchise holders will almost certainly be allowed to "re-up" for another seven years of monopoly private control, if they want to. I gave up any hope of creating a Los Angeles Cable Co-op.

2002 As the movement for San Fernando Valley secession progressed, I launch my campaign for a city council seat in the 14th District of the new Valley City that will probably be created in November 2002, if secession is approved by the voters at an election then.

I speak to Bill Rosendahl, the head of Adelphia's LA operations, about the fate of his company's franchise agreement with the city in the eventuality that secession succeeds. Since the Adelphia franchise

expires in August, 2002, he suggests that the most reasonable course of action would be for the City of Los Angeles to extend the franchise by one year and then let whichever government is at that time presiding over the Adelphia service area negotiate a new agreement with the company.

April 24, 2002 Campaigning for office in the 14th District, I attend a lunch meeting of the Government Affairs Committee of the Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce. Sitting next to me is Ken Camp, a staffer for LA City Councilmember Jack Weiss. He hands out a flyer in which Councilmember Weiss calls for a City Council investigation of the financial viability of Adelphia Communications, which just recently had disclosed a \$2.3 billion debt, previously and especially during its negotiations with the City to take over additional service areas, not mentioned. Councilmember Weiss, a former Federal prosecutor, points out in his press release that:

"Recently the City approved the transfer of five of its cable franchise areas to Adelphia based on financial and technical information provided by Adelphia prior to the recent revelations of financial difficulty."

"For now, there is some speculation about Adelphia's long term viability. I hope that these concerns can be addressed by a thorough City examination of Adelphia's books," Weiss concluded.

I ask Mr. Camp what will happen to the 250,000 City households where Adelphia provides cable service if the City decides to terminate Adelphia's franchise agreement because it had withheld pertinent financial information when it applied for the transfer to it of the aforementioned additional cable franchises. He refers me to the downtown office of Councilmember Weiss.

I call that office and ask that question. I am told someone would get back to me. No one does, so I call back and speak with Alan Paul, Councilmember Weiss' Legislative Assistant. He sends me a digital copy of the aforementioned press release and a copy of a motion by Councilmember Weiss calling for an investigation of Adelphia to be conducted by the City Attorney of Los Angeles along with the City's Information Technology Agency (ITA).

I have attached PDF versions of the press release and the motion calling for an investigation of Adelphia Communications. I will continue my investigations/advocacy for a Los Angeles Cable Co-op or a Valley Cities Cable Co-op (if secession succeeds) and let you know what happens.

Read more about this at:

Adelphia's Credit Rating Cut 2 Levels by S&P
Los Angeles Times, April 23, 2002

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-000028773apr23.story>

Adelphia to Delay 10-K Filing Again
Los Angeles Times, April 17, 2002

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-000027285apr17.story>

Adelphia Sales May Miss Forecast, Analysts Say
Los Angeles Times, April 11, 2002

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-000025780apr11.story>

Adelphia May Spend Less on Equipment
Los Angeles Times, April 9, 2002

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-000025251apr09.story>

From the April 7, 2002, Los Angeles Times

Adelphia to Sell Some Cable Systems

Adelphia Communications Corp. has agreed to sell up to half of its cable systems, worth as much as \$8 billion, to pay off some of its debt.

John Rigas, the 77-year-old founder of Adelphia, has agreed to put up for sale operations that include his prized Los Angeles systems, which he acquired only two years ago, sources close to the company said.

Shares have fallen about 50% since the company disclosed that it had guaranteed \$2.3 billion in loans to off-balance-sheet partnerships.

The Securities and Exchange Commission is conducting an informal investigation.

Find a lot more by going to <http://www.latimes.com>

and Searching under "Adelphia debt".

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue Apr 30, 2002 11:03 am

Subject: Press Release, Streaming Video Clip, Online Poll

Dear Subscriber,

I don't know if you've ever received a press release accompanied by links to a streaming video clip and a sample of Internet-based voting, but I'm sending you one now.

The attached PDF contains "Virtual White Paper #2: Let's Put Valley City City Hall Everywhere and Nowhere." It's my latest effort to define the debate for the upcoming secession and local Valley City elections.

To see and hear a very low quality streaming video of my April 24, 2002, presentation before the Los Angeles City Council's Committee on Reapportionment, make sure you have RealPlayer installed and then click on:

<http://www.techwise.tv:8080/ramgen/presentation-04-24-2002.rm>

If you haven't already done so, take a short survey about Internet voting on the eLect Internet voting platform that I used to create this poll, go to:

<http://e3.theoac.com/app/1813/1735>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President, Etopia
Council Candidate, 14th District
Valley City, California

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From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat May 25, 2002 10:59 am

Subject: UK Internet Voting/Author Interviews a Model for E-Gov and E-Dem Applications

Dear Subscriber,

For the latest on the UK's effort to surge ahead in the Internet voting race, please go to:

http://www.press.dtlr.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2002_0215

For some non-political diversion, and a demonstration of a platform that can also be used for e-government and e-democracy applications, please go to:

<http://www.lpbn.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=69>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

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From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed Jun 5, 2002 8:29 pm

Subject: See "The Last Lone Inventor" Author Interview

Dear Subscriber,

For an example of what can be done with streaming video on a limited budget, and to learn more about the struggle for world domination through the invention of television, please go to:

<http://etopia.lpbm.org/etopiabooks>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue Jun 11, 2002 9:56 pm

Subject: Announcement of Worldwide Webcast of Valley Secession Forum at California State University at Northridge

Dear Concerned Citizen,

By visiting the Linux Public Broadcasting Network website at:

<http://www.lpbm.org>

at 6:30 pm Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) on Wednesday, June 12, 2002, you will probably be able to see and hear a live worldwide webcast of a possibly interesting public forum dedicated to discussing the secession of the San Fernando Valley from the City of Los Angeles.

Just click to the LPBN page and look for the blatant announcement of where to click to see the show. If you can't make the live performance, go to the site at your own convenience and look for the archived version of it.

Since it's often hard to tell the players without a scorecard, and since some of you receiving this announcement are not residents of Los Angeles, I've attached two recent articles about Valley secession. Reading them should give you a pretty good idea of what's going on, at least as seen from my own point of view.

I hope you'll be able to attend this worldwide webcast.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Jun 21, 2002 3:48 pm

Subject: Enron Comes to City Hall While We Exit

Dear Subscriber,

Enron Comes to City Hall While We Exit

By Marc Strassman
President, Etopia
etopia@adelphia.net

June 21, 2002

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Lately, more than a few previously-highly respected institutions have come under various degrees of extreme criticism for their abuse of power. Included in this list are:

1. Enron
2. The Catholic Church
3. The Red Cross
4. Long distance phone companies
5. the US intelligence community
6. Wall Street in general

While the specifics of this abuse have varied from case to case, what all these organizations had in common was a top heavy, arrogant, bureaucratic, entrenched leadership structure. Their monopoly, or near-monopoly, control of some essential resource emboldened them to exercise power in ways that benefited those at the top while hurting everyone else.

As Lord Acton said, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Here in Los Angeles we have another such organization, one that is top-heavy, bureaucratic, entrenched, and seemingly-invincible. I refer to the incumbent government of the City of Los Angeles.

Fortunately, those of us who are not part of the top leadership of the City of Angels have a simple, legal

way to extricate ourselves from the clutches of the Downtown Establishment: secession.

In "Animal Farm," an allegory of revolution gone bad, the oppressed animals are led to freedom by the clever pigs, who, unfortunately, by the end of the story have morphed into the oppressive farmers who previously held them all in subjugation. We need to heed the author's warning. We need to insure that Valley secession does not result in the cloning of the current regime in City Hall with a Valley veneer and the creation of a new government and bureaucracy that are as boring and unresponsive as the original.

Opponents of secession have recently proposed a "borough" system of decentralization as an alternative to real secession, as though making Los Angeles more like New York City would be a solution for anything. This "borough" system is a variant of the "neighborhood council" alternative, also suggested as a means of thwarting secession and now mostly discredited.

Nevertheless, providing for local control and the decentralization of power, when done authentically, is a good way to prevent the concentration of power that has done so much damage in other contexts. But to do it right means giving real, not sham, power to subdivisions of the new Valley City jurisdiction.

What might make sense, in this context, is to establish as "boroughs" each of the 14 council districts envisioned for Valley City. Each of these Districts could be divided into ten Sub-Districts. Each of these Sub-Districts can be divided into ten Micro-Districts. The result would be 1400 political jurisdictions of approximately one thousand residents each.

The basic idea of "Tiered Jurisdictions" would give effective control of each Micro-District to the one thousand people living in it. Using a combination of on- and off-line methods of information distribution, consultation, polling, and decision-making, the one thousand people in each Micro-District would be enabled and empowered to decide for themselves all municipal matters that apply solely to their Micro-District.

Similarly, using on- and offline methods, representatives (and in many cases most of the residents themselves) of each Micro-District will work together at the Sub-District level to make decisions that effect their Sub-District as a whole. Moving up, Sub-District reps and residents will work together to make decisions on matters that impact the entire District.

Finally, Councilmembers and the residents of the entire District will work with Councilmembers and residents of all the other Districts to determine Valley City-wide policies and budget priorities.

Because this structure gives so much power to people at every level, it nicely reflects the arguments of secession supporters that the point of secession is to empower the people of the Valley. The campaign for Valley secession, which depends so heavily on the volunteer efforts of thousands of Valley residents, could further its own goals, while laying the groundwork for tiered jurisdictions, by organizing its volunteers in a "tiered campaign organization," which also gives autonomy and authority to micro-, sub-, and district level groups working to achieve secession.

Once cityhood is won, these organizations could form the basis of tiered government for the new Valley City.

Since Valley City, at 1.4 million residents, would be the eighth largest of California's 58 counties, perhaps in a few years it will be. Perhaps this system of "tiered jurisdictions" will be adopted in other places. Let's start the ball rolling by trying it out here first, in the new Valley City. We have nothing to lose but the right to complain that others are making unfair decisions in our name.

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed Jul 3, 2002 11:19 am

Subject: "Understanding E-Government" Presentation, June 24, 2002

Dear Subscriber,

If you'd like to watch a steaming video version of a presentation I made to a delegation of businesspeople from Japan in Los Angeles on June 24th, please go to:

<http://www.lpbn.org>

then scroll down about five inches from the top, to where it says:

Marc Strassman on the state of eGovernment in the US - Part 1

Marc Strassman on the state of eGovernment in the US - Part 2

and click.

Please send any comments you have about the content of this presentation to me at:

etopia@adelphia.net

I apologize in advance to any of you who receive multiple copies of this notice due to you being on multiple lists.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia Consulting

From: "virtualorange" <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Jul 20, 2002 1:10 am

Subject: Internet Voting Due to Take Over in Great Britain by 2006

Dear Subscriber,

What I suggested in 1996 with the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative is now on track to become official policy in Great Britain in 2006. Read the details at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/internetnews/story/0,7369,756668,00.html>

For some commentary on this development, not all of it positive, read this:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_2135000/2135911.stm

Incidentally, I'm now running for City Council in the proposed Valley City, now part of Los Angeles, in California, in the United States. An election to decide on secession for this 222 square mile/1.3 million resident jurisdiction will take place on November 5, 2002.

Internet voting will not be used, but Internet voting, Smart Initiatives, and Instant Constituent polls, but not yet direct voting on all municipal matters, are all included in my campaign platform.

Find out more at my embryonic website at:

<http://sfc.lpbn.org>

US citizens can make contributions of any size they choose at the site.

Sign up for the Strassman for Council mailing list at:

<http://mail.lpbn.org/mailman/listinfo/sfc>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia Consulting

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon Aug 5, 2002 5:51 pm

Subject: Assemblymember Pot Calls Mayor Kettle Black

Dear Subscriber,

My main opponent in my race for Mayor of the new Valley City is California State (Republican) Assemblymember Keith Richman. He recently attacked Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn for "shaking down" big corporations to get money to fund the anti-secession campaign. While applauding his efforts, I wondered what his own record was when it came to accepting campaign money from corporations with fish to fry in the California Legislature.

You can read the article with his attacks at:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-secede3aug03.story>

You can read two other articles that discuss the campaign contributions made to Assemblyman Richman and other members of the California Assembly Health Committee by the HMO industry and the subsequent lack of progress in enacting consumer/patient protection legislation opposed by this industry due to the actions or inactions of this committee at:

<http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/healthcare/pr/pr002248.php3>

<http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/healthcare/pr/pr002424.php3>

Before offering you a chance to read my commentary on all this, I want to cordially invite you to visit my Strassman for Mayor website, at:

<http://sfm.lpbn.org>

There's not much there yet, just an audio clip called "Why I'm Running," a link for donating money to the campaign, and two links to the first and second halves of "Understanding E-Government," a streaming video of the presentation I made in June to a group of visiting NEC executives and engineers.

What I'd most like you to do is sign up for the Strassman for Mayor (of the new Valley City) mailing list, which you can do very easily by clicking where it says:

- Join the SFM Mailing List

You can find this link towards the upper left-hand corner of the page, under "Home" in the Main Menu.

Once you've signed up for the list, please come back and read the letter/e-mail I sent yesterday to the local reporters who cover secession. Its theme is how corporate contributions can corrupt politics, a conclusion that by now should surprise no one.
Dear Secession Reporter,

In Saturday's Los Angeles Times, their secession reporter Patrick McGreevy wrote about Assemblymember Keith Richman (R-Northridge) and his attack on Mayor Hahn for accepting campaign funds from organizations with direct interests in lucrative city contracts. As we all agree by now, letting private organizations pay the political piper too often means that they get to call the tune, often at the expense of ordinary citizens.

You can see this article at:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-secede3aug03.story>

It was with some interest, therefore, that I read how Republican Assemblymember Richman is the fifth largest recipient of health industry contributions of any member of the Assembly Health Committee in Sacramento.

<http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/healthcare/pr/pr002248.php3>

<http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/healthcare/pr/pr002424.php3>

As the May 8, 2002, article points out, consideration of all legislation designed to bolster patient rights vis a vis the HMO giants has been postponed at least until next year, when it will be referred to a "proposed Benefits Commission."

As the author of the Smart Initiatives Initiative, designed to take the money (and the annoyance of being harassed in public by paid signature gatherers) out of the initiative process, and someone who testified in that capacity in January, 2001, before "Speaker Emeritus" Robert Hertzberg's "Speakers Commission on the California Initiative Process" and who is still waiting for the final report of that group, I can say with some assurance that being referred to a proposed commission is tantamount to being "deep-sixed" with a longer label.

So Mr. Richman viciously attacks Mayor Hahn for trading money for favors, while taking money and acquiescing (at least) in favors done for the powerful

and politically-astute "health care industry" by the Assembly Health Committee, where he no doubt carries some weight as a physician himself.

Just as Republican President George Bush calls down the wrath of heaven on those corporate executives who fail to report their insider stock sales in a timely manner and who get personal loans from their companies, while having himself been the poster child for such behavior while at Harken Energy, Republican Assemblyman Richman seems to think that he can, with political profit, attack, Mayor Hahn for the same behavior he himself is guilty off.

This pattern of ironic self-condemnation, by the way, goes back much further than the 90s. Oedipus, no mean politician himself (although presumably not a Republican), when confronted by the people of Thebes demanding relief from the plague that was destroying their town, held a press conference in the agora and publicly swore that whoever was responsible for the curse afflicting the town should surely be put to death.

Even further back, King David of Judea, who had sent Bethsheba's husband Uriah to the northern front to die in battle, and then took her to wife, listened most attentively to the prophet Nathan, his chief advisor, his Karl Rove, as he told him the parable of the man with many sheep and the man of few sheep. Appalled at the injustice done to the man of few sheep when the man of many sheep took one of the few for a dinner party he was giving, the many-wived King David thundered, "Surely the man who has done this must die!" Nathan thundered right back: "Thou art the man!"

Keith Richman and George Bush are no Oedipus or King David. But the lesson of these stories, one Greek and one Hebrew, is that if you're a pot, you shouldn't be calling the kettle black, and if you live in a glass house, you shouldn't be throwing stones.

The material concerning the connection between contributions received by Keith Richman and the failure of the Assembly Health Committee on which he serves to take action on behalf of patients' rights, as reported by the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, is the smallest tip of the iceberg in terms of his contributors and their political agendas.

Thanks to the work of outgoing Secretary of State, Bill Jones, we can now easily access computerized records of campaign contributions. The list of those organizations and individuals who have contributed to Assemblymember Richman's current campaign for re-election to the State Assembly (which he is

pursuing simultaneously with his run for Mayor of the new Valley City), can be found at:

<http://cal-access.ss.ca.gov/Campaign/Committees/calaccess.asp?session=2001&id=12\32100&detail=RECEIVED>

This same data, in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, has also been attached to this e-mail.

The list of Richman contributors includes a litany of drug companies, HMOs, car dealers, real estate developers, and law firms. Some regular citizens have contributed, but most of the real money comes from major corporate players in these sectors. It is a uniform, coordinated, and complete collection of the major economic entities that either enjoy or seek to enjoy complete control over our health care, transportation, housing, telecommunications, and entertainment, companies who need actions, or inactions, from government to close the circle and perfect their control.

It's an invitation list to a party that can most kindly be called ?the corporate state? and we are not on it.

Attacking Mayor Hahn's anti-secession fundraising, Assemblymember Richman said, "They raised this money in one of the most arrogant and brazen shakedown schemes in recent political history." He went on to say, "Look up and down the list of donors to the mayor's committee--almost all the large-scale donors on that list stand to make a lot of money from having Jim Hahn in their back pocket."

Take a look at the list of Richman corporate contributors and see if you can find one who DOESN'T stand to make a lot of money from having a member of the Assembly Health Committee, or simply an Assemblyman, in their back pocket.

It seems completely obvious from the roster of Richman's corporate contributors that if you're a major big business with major interests at stake every time the State Assembly votes, that you know whom you like and whom you trust to do your bidding inside the Capital building in Sacramento. If, instead, you're an ordinary person who wants to be represented by someone who owes his or her election to you and not to a corporation with the means, the motive, and the opportunity to put you on hold for as long as it feels like, then maybe you'll want to look elsewhere for a Mayor for the new Valley City.

Keith Richman performs a valuable public service when he attacks Mayor Hahn for being, or appearing to be, compromised in his pursuit of what he considers the public good because he accepts political campaign money tainted by its origins in the treasuries of corporations who stand to gain or lose a great deal according to how elected officials behave. He'd have a lot more credibility, though, if he weren't doing the same thing himself.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
the other serious candidate for Mayor
of the not-yet existing Valley City

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue Aug 20, 2002 3:26 pm

Subject: Trivial Coverage and Substantive Coverage of My Campaign for Universal Broadband and E-Democracy in the New Valley City

Dear Subscriber,

Here's an e-mail I just sent to one of the reporters at the Los Angeles Times who's covering the campaign for mayor of the new Valley City:

Dear Mr. McGreevy,

I am, as you know
(<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-mayors20aug20.story>)
the Valley mayoral candidate with a rumpled bed, bags of books, and a laptop keyboard with letters worn off by pecking.

Surprisingly, I also have a campaign platform with innovative and sometimes startling approaches to the problems facing the Valley. It's a platform with more points than there are colorful candidates in the crowded field for mayor (13 points versus 10 candidates).

I've attached it. Do you think you could cover this substance (which is why I think I should be elected mayor), now that the People magazine-type fluff has been more than adequately covered?

I'm available for interviews about my platform at your convenience. Having served your needs for amusing human interest coverage by doing the interview that resulted in today's story, I hope you will agree to serve mine by reporting on the substance of my proposals for improving the economic and political life of 1.3 million Valley residents. These proposals, by the way, could have the same effect on all 3.8 million residents of Los Angeles, but only if they are implemented, which can't happen until people hear about them. Which is where the Times ought to come in.

Thank you,

Marc Strassman
President, Etopia Consulting
Producer-Host, "Talk of the Valley"

Candidate for Mayor of the new Valley City

As a candidate for mayor of the new Valley City, I've developed a platform with some specific proposals beyond the platitudes of "lower taxes" and "smaller government" to show how creating a new city will deliver benefits impossible in the old one.

My platform calls for:

1. Providing EVERY business and household in the new city with broadband Internet connectivity, using a combination of municipalized cable networks, a city-owned competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC), and bulk purchases of emerging 3G wireless services. Working with private companies to provide extremely low-cost computing devices for every business and household in the new city, including desktop, laptop, and handheld computers, as well as all types of cellular/wireless computing devices, including ?web-enabled? cell phones.
2. Building on this new universality of Internet connectivity to provide a comprehensive set of e-government services, thereby increasing citizen access to government, improving the cost-effectiveness of service delivery, and, using expert systems, knowledge management, data mining, and civic personalization to further drastically upgrade the efficiency of government operations, and then redeploy to higher levels of value-added service or eliminate all city bureaucrats.
3. The notorious digital divide having been thus eliminated, all Valley City residents will now be able to use the Internet to telecommute, conduct e-commerce as sellers and buyers, take advantage of telelearning and telemedicine opportunities, and generally participate in the evolving digital revolution.
4. Combining emerging wireless breakthroughs (including voice recognition and voice authentication) with a comprehensive deployment of e-government applications will create a "mobile e-government" (m-e-gov), allowing citizens to interact with their government "anytime, anywhere" using any web-enabled digital device, including cellular phones rather than ?computers.?
5. Employing Open Source software and procedures to avoid dependency on proprietary vendors and to ensure transparency and security of all computer and network operations within city government and between the City and the people of Valley City. The process by which Open Source software is created and maintained can serve as a model and as a facilitator for creating and maintaining Open Government.

6. Using this "Municipal Information and Telecommunications Utility" to provide e-democracy services to the new city, including Internet voting in elections, Smart Initiatives (using universally-distributed digital certificates to enable the digital signing of initiative [and recall] petitions), and Instant Online Polling, allowing citizens to "pre-vote" on any or all proposed ordinances under consideration by the elected council, so that votes on municipal legislation would take place under the figurative or literal shadow of a big screen displaying the popular direct "pre-vote" on any measure being considered by the council. New Valley City residents, fully informed through the Net about both the "pre-vote" results (tabulated and displayed on a city-wide and district basis) and the actions of their "representatives," would then be able to vote to re-elect, defeat, or recall their "representatives" on the basis of how representative they had been.

7. Doing everything possible to bring more solar panels generating photovoltaic electricity to the Valley. Shell & Siemens Solar has a big new manufacturing facility in Chatsworth, in the San Fernando Valley. Expanding solar electricity generation in the Valley will create more local jobs, reduce costs for energy users, pollution for everyone, and (in a small way) national dependency on foreign energy sources. The increased generation of solar power will also facilitate the transition to sustainably/renewably-powered means of transportation, such as the Ford TH!NK Mobility City electric car, the early introduction into the Valley and the proliferation of which here I am also pursuing.

8. For many of these projects, I envision an innovative new ownership/management structure, with the new Valley City serving as coordinator and financier for a new type of government-public-private partnership. These arrangements would feature a governing "board of directors" elected by the entire city population or some use- or location-oriented subgroup of that population, its priorities and preferences to be ascertained using the MITU/direct digital democracy network. This board would, in turn, oversee one or more privately-owned companies (or city agencies) actually capable of researching, developing, deploying, and operating the electronic networks, e-government applications, or power systems necessary to provide the desired services. This arrangement would mean we could combine the benefits of entrepreneurial/corporate management efficiency with those of popularly-determined goals, directions, priorities, and values. Public and private service providers would be amply rewarded for good results, reliability, good customer service, and innovation.

The ultimate responsibility of this system to citizens, not stockholders, would keep prices down and service levels up

9. To the extent that this integrated system of universal wireless broadband Internet access, modified direct digital democracy, sustainable energy and transportation systems, and innovative government-public-private ownership/management arrangements successfully synergizes and provides a high quality of life for Valley residents, the new Valley City model could serve as an example for other cities, states, and countries, both those who've seceded and those who have not.

10. While waiting for other jurisdictions to adopt these reforms and innovations, new Valley City's government, businesses, and people could do well by doing good providing outsourced mobile e-government, e-democracy, sustainable energy, and integrated management services on a cost-plus basis to the forward-looking governments and citizens who want them, while assisting them in developing and deploying their own localized versions of these systems.

11. Establishing a Municipal Webcasting Network (MWN) to deliver live and archived video coverage of all government meetings, civic events, community policy discussions, and other community events, such as soccer games. The MWN would allow council members to attend council meetings and committee meetings remotely, from wherever they are, and allow residents to do the same.

12. Using the now universally-available Internet both to determine the popular will and to administer policies derived from it will allow for e-democracy and e-government at the speed of thought, and a system of self-governance that is truly "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

13. Establishing a great public-private university to educate, entertain, and inspire the people of the new Valley City and elsewhere, while upgrading the skill level of Valley residents in emerging fields, conducting world-class scientific and technical research, thereby generating cutting-edge economic development, and fostering the emergence of people and ideas that will yield tangible and intangible benefits to humankind now and long into the future.

There's some new material on my campaign website, at <http://sfm.lpbm.org>, if you want to take a look.

Regards,

Marc Strassman

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu Aug 22, 2002 11:29 am

Subject: SFM 4.0: A Plan to Rejuvenate the New Valley City from the Strassman for Mayor Campaign, August 22, 2002

Dear Subscriber,

A few days ago I sent you a document containing the platform on which I'm running for Mayor of the new Valley City. It was somewhat detailed.

Now, for your convenience and the convenience of news organizations and other groups with whom you may be in contact, I'm sending you simplified versions of that platform, presented as PowerPoint slides, a PDF version of those slides (for those without the PowerPoint program), and a flyer, SFM Flyer #2: The Sportmen's Lodge Issue, which contains the same material.

Please distribute these as widely as you can.

Regards,

Marc Strassman

President, Etopia Consulting
Producer-Host, "Talk of the Valley"
Candidate for Mayor of the new Valley City

[63 SFM 4.0 PowerPoint slideshow in Acrobat format.pdf](#)

[63 SFM 4.0 PowerPoint slideshow.ppt](#)

[63 SFM Flyer 1.pdf](#)

[63 SFM Flyer 2.pdf](#)

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Aug 24, 2002 7:47 pm

Subject: New Media and New Content at Strassman for Mayor Website
(<http://sfm.lpbm.org>)

Dear Subscriber,

Here comes my new Valley City mayoral campaign platform in yet another form. The PDF version of the PowerPoint slideshow is now posted as a scrolling file on the Strassman for Mayor website, at <http://sfm.lpbm.org>.

Also now posted there is a 36-minute streaming video of the first episode of my new talk show, "Talk of the Valley." The question we address on this show is "Is Valley Secession Good for the Rest of Los Angeles?" You'll be amazed at the technical quality of this show.

Please send your suggestions for future episodes (which don't have to be about secession, or even politics) to me at etopia@adelphia.net.

Anyone who wants to get involved as a co-host, guest, or to recommend a guest for a Talk of the Valley show, wherever in the world you are, should contact us here in Valley City at etopia@adelphia.net. All you need to get involved is a web cam and something to say.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Producer-Host
Talk of the Valley

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon Aug 26, 2002 2:10 am

Subject: Daily News Questionnaire

Dear Subscriber,

From

-----THE WEEKLY POLITICKER-----

http://www.politicsonline.com/pol2000/politicker_view.asp

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The laptop is mightier than the lawn sign...one person with no money and no help can get himself elected..." - Marc Strassman, a candidate for Mayor of the prospective Valley City in California that will be created if the San Fernando Valley is allowed to secede from Los Angeles this fall.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-mayors20aug20.story?coll=la%2Dheadlines%2Dcalifornia>

*Registration Required

To show how the PDF file is mightier than the printing press, I'm attaching a copy of "Candidate Strassman Replies to the Los Angeles Daily News Questionnaire, August 26, 2002," which I just sent to that news organization. But you can read it here first.

Regards,

Marc Strassman

[65 Los Angeles Daily News Questionnaire, August 26, 2002.pdf](#)

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Sep 6, 2002 7:59 pm

Subject: Coalition for HRX

Dear EuronacUEE Subscriber,

Representative Robert E. Andrews, the Congressman from the 1st District in the US state of New Jersey, has drafted a bill that would vastly expand the prevalence of e-government in the United States. It doesn't have a bill number yet, since it won't be formally introduced for legislative consideration for two or three more weeks. House bills are usually labeled H.R. 6 or H.R. 103 after they are introduced. For now, we can call this bill HRX. I'll let you know when HRX gets its official number.

HRX calls for the federal government to provide loans to libraries, school districts, cities and states for them to use in building e-government systems. It would require them to repay these loans with money saved or earned through the use of these new systems. Except for two or three deficiencies, it seems like a good bill in a good cause.

The three deficiencies I found most glaring were:

1. Third Generation (3G) wireless broadband networks are not included under the definition of "broadband."
2. There is no mention of allowing or requiring the use of Open Source software to implement e-government services in the systems to be created with money from this program, a step that could increase the transparency, security, and stability of the applications involved, while saving money and freeing users from dependence on a single proprietary vendor.
3. It refers to and very complicatedly and unclearly defines something it calls "pyramidal resources." The definition and function of this term within the bill need to be clarified.

A staffer in Representative Andrew's office told me today that their plan is to introduce HRX this year as a prelude to passing it next year.

I believe that passing HRX could move the deployment of e-government in the US to a new, higher level. I am therefore proposing the creation, under the auspices of CUEE, of a "Coalition for HRX," which

would unite and synergize the efforts of end users, libraries, school districts, cities, states, and corporations developing and selling e-government products and services in a campaign to educate the public and policy makers on the bill, and to convince the members of the House of Representatives and the US Senate to pass HRX and to make sure that the President signs it into law.

This ought not to be that difficult. More and better e-government is good for business, good for citizens, good for high-tech firms, and cost-effective for the jurisdictions that implement it. It makes the economy more efficient and it makes government a more responsive servant of the people.

It's also possible, since the bill as it currently stands is rather vague about how it will be implemented, for this "Coalition for HRX," which will consist of all the major players who will be involved in its deployment and use, to work within itself to develop, draft and propose to the Congress methods and systems for its effective and equitable administration, which could be added to the basic bill as it now stands, or to the basic bill after it's been modified on the basis of suggestions from the "Coalition" and others.

I'm attaching a copy of HRX. It's short. I hope you can look it over and get back to me with any comments you have, either about the substance of the bill or about how you think CUEE ought to proceed in building a ?Coalition for HRX.?

You can contact me by e-mail at etopia@adelphia.net.

Of course, if this approach works in the US, there's no reason it couldn't be put to work in other countries as well.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Citizens United for Excellence in E-Government

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Sep 20, 2002 2:12 pm

Subject: Comments on Political Access

Dear Subscriber,

To join the worldwide streaming video audience, and hear my latest pronouncements on how the Internet can give voters and candidates disintermediated access to each other, please check out the latest video interviews near the top of the page at:

<http://www.lpbn.org>

Any US citizen so impressed by this that he or she wants to join the growing number of people actually making a contribution to my campaign for mayor of the new Valley City that may secede from the City of Los Angeles can do so at the bottom of the SFM campaign site at:

<http://sfm.lpbn.org>

Thank you and feel free to copy these approaches in your our jurisdiction.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Citizens United for Excellence in E-Government

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Sep 21, 2002 11:32 am

Subject: Streaming Videos of Five 9th Council District Candidates in Valley City

Dear Subscriber,

No longer is it necessary for political candidates to sell themselves to moneyed special interest in order to raise the money they need for expensive television airtime.

With streaming videos produced and distributed online by the Linux Public Broadcasting Network, now they only need to sell themselves to the voters.

Please take a look at the streaming video interviews of five Valley City City Council candidates from the 9th Council District, at:

<http://www.lpbn.org>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Candidate for Mayor
Valley City

Producer-Host
"Talk of the Valley"/"Meet the Candidates"

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon Sep 23, 2002 12:38 am

Subject: Democratization Through Cyberization in the New Valley City

Dear Subscriber,

The Los Angeles Daily News, the largest newspaper in the San Fernando Valley, with a claimed Sunday circulation of 214,000, has finally run an article in which my proposals for the democratization through cyberization of the new Valley City that may soon secede from the City of Los Angeles are included.

Here's what they said I want to do:

Article Last Updated: Saturday, September 21, 2002 - 9:16:22 PM MST

10 who dare for valley mayor or else
By James Nash, Staff Writer

Marc Strassman envisions a Valley where every household has at least one computer and Internet access, where the computers are an integral tool of democracy and where solar energy provides electricity to thousands.

Strassman mentions computers and the Internet as a solution to many of the Valley's woes, from crime to economic stagnation. Other candidates have a less-radical vision, one that will result in the Valley simply becoming a smaller version of Los Angeles, Strassman said.

"They're talking about shuffling resources around," he said. "We're talking about creating new resources and truly empowering people through e-government. If we're going through all this trouble for secession, we might as well create something new and different and interesting."

Strassman said he would set to work immediately on providing computers and Internet access for poor people, the lack of which has prevented them from participating fully in the economic, social, political and cultural life of America, he said.

Computer networks would allow people to weigh in on local issues online, as well as see what their government is doing, Strassman said.

To access the entire article, and to read the views of the pedestrian and obvious suggestions from most of the other candidates and the somewhat delusional comments of others, along with what I'm characterizing as the simultaneously visionary and practical proposals coming from my campaign, go to:

<http://www.dailynews.com/Stories/0,1413,200%257E20954%257E873692,00.html?search=filter>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Candidate for Mayor in the new Valley City

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed Oct 2, 2002 3:21 pm

Subject: In the New Valley City, Almost All Bureaucrats Would Telecommute Using a Universal Ubiquitous Broadband Wireless Network

Dear Subscriber,

I had a chance to make the case for more telecommuting over the Internet in today's Los Angeles Daily News, so I did:

"Marc Strassman said Wilson's proposal was a watered-down version of his own plan to provide universal Internet access for Valley residents and allow them to do their jobs online. Strassman said nearly all Valley city workers would telecommute, rather than the 10 percent Wilson proposed.

"Overall, the need is to create an integrated system that re-creates the way people work and live," Strassman said."

To read the entire article, go to:

<http://www.dailynews.com/Stories/0,1413,200%257E20954%257E896626,00.html?search=\filter>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Candidate for Mayor in the New Valley City

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From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu Oct 10, 2002 2:05 pm

Subject: Streaming Video Clip of New Valley City Mayoral Candidates in Granada Hills, October 8, 2002

Dear Subscriber,

To see and hear some of the candidates running for Mayor of the still-problematic new Valley City, go to:

<http://www.lpbn.org/smil/mayor-1.smil>

My own contribution to the proceedings begins 3 minutes into the clip.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Candidate for Mayor of the New Valley City

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From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue Oct 22, 2002 3:53 pm

Subject: "An E-Mayor for Virtual L.A. City" by Patrick di Justo in Wired News

Dear Subscriber,

Wired News today posted an article about my campaign for mayor of the new Valley city. It's at:

<http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,55911,00.html>

Regards,

Marc Strassman
candidate for Mayor
President, Etopia

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Nov 1, 2002 2:05 pm

Subject: live interview on Etopia Network

Dear Subscriber,

I'm being interviewed in one hour by TechTV. I'll be trying to transmit the interview event live through streaming video over the Etopia Network.

You should be able to watch it at:

<http://stream.lpbn.org:8080/ramgen/encoder/techtv.rm>

This is still an experimental process, so there may not be anything there at all. But there may be, and I hope you enjoy watching it if there is.

You can also see several new archived campaign videos at:

<http://sfm.lpbn.org>

After the election, I'll be shifting my main focus from politics to entertainment, producing EtopiaTalk (an interview/talk show) and EtopiaSoap (an interactive soap opera). Both will use the streaming video techniques I've been developing for use in my campaign.

I'll also be organizing a national effort to improve and pass a bill being drafted now by Representative Rob Andrews of New Jersey to expand broadband Internet access (especially to rural areas) and e-governmental services for everyone. I'm attaching the rather garbled current version of this bill.

If you have ideas about this bill and/or want to get involved in the "Coalition for HRX" that will be working to pass it, you can e-mail me at:

hrx@adelphia.net

I hope you enjoy the show.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Candidate for Mayor in the new Valley City
Executive Director, Coalition for HRX

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon Dec 2, 2002 10:06 pm

Subject: Transparency, Informational Asymmetry, and the Emerging Surveillance State

Dear Subscriber/Reporter,

The campaign for San Fernando Valley secession and my campaign for Mayor of the Valley City that would have resulted from a victory are both over. It and I lost. I did, however, finish eighth in a field of ten, and received slightly more than 4,000 votes, for which I had to pay around \$200 in campaign costs, while the top vote-getter paid around \$200,000 to get around 80,000 votes. So my campaign was around 40 times more effective than his.

Due to the failure of secession to garner a majority of votes in the entire City of Los Angeles, there will be no Valley City and my electoral defeat means I will not hold an office that won't exist in a jurisdiction that won't exist either. Talk about virtuality.

To see the official results and a chart illustrating them, please go to:

http://rrccmain.co.la.ca.us/0022_LocalContest_Frame.htm

The campaign to build a "Coalition for HRX," a bill being prepared for introduction into the United States House of Representatives in January, 2003, by Representative Robert Andrews of New Jersey in order to spur broadband deployment and expand e-government access, is on hold until Congress re-convenes next year. You can, however, avoid the rush by signing up now for the HRX mailing list. All you need to do is to send an empty e-mail to:

hr_x-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

In the meantime, I've written three articles about "transparency" which may be of use as the debate grows about how much surveillance of ordinary people is enough.

I wanted to attach these articles to this message, but Yahoo! is acting up and there is absolutely no one there to answer questions about foul-ups. So I'm adding these three articles after this cover letter in the body of the text, unless, of course, doing that pushes me over the allotted limit of text.

After I added the three texts to this e-mail, the attachment function sprang back to life. But I've left the three pieces added below anyway, in case something equally crazy happens between now and when I send you this e-mail.

After reading them, you might want to check out the sites of these four companies/products which could conceivably be involved in making it possible for the Total Information Awareness program at the Pentagon to make more and deeper intrusions into our everyday activities.

Identix Corporation

<http://www.identix.com/>

eNeuralNet

<http://www.eneuralnet.com/index.html>

SoftScan

<http://www.scansoft.com/mediaindexter/default.asp>

Virage

<http://www.virage.com/customers/>

Don't forget to click on the URL at the bottom of this e-mail to see some streaming video that recapitulates the contents of this text, but in a more vivid manner.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
President
Etopia

Transparency: Seeing It Through, *or* A Dozen Things Excellent Transparency Should Be

By Marc Strassman

November 28, 2002

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Now that “transparency” is all the rage for governments and corporations, it’s important to take a minute to delineate just what’s involved in making an institution truly transparent, easily visible, not camouflaged, or directly knowable by normal citizens and reporters who want to scrutinize it or just know exactly what it’s up to.

To help provide a basis upon which to judge the transparency of a city government or a big corporation, here are a dozen characteristics that any institution aspiring to transparency ought to exhibit. The information provided by an organization to establish its transparency should be:

1. Accurate

Unless the information provided is truthful and correct, it doesn't contribute much to transparency.

2. Timely, if not Instantaneous

Data delayed is knowledge denied. To the greatest extent possible, data needs to be captured, added to the transparency data base, and made available for viewing as it is generated. This is "real-time transparency."

3. Complete

Partial information may be worse than no information at all, especially when it creates an inaccurate picture of an important context or all the implications of some isolated facts.

4. Accessible

If citizens and the media don't have convenient, no-cost, readily-available access to the information that is supposed to make an organization transparent, then that organization isn't transparent. Universal broadband connectivity is the best way to provide this level of accessibility to transparency data.

5. Comprehensible

Presenting data in incomprehensible formats, or legal jargon, or accounting jargon, or other private languages designed to keep laypeople from understanding what's going on is the opposite of transparency. If necessary, organizations need to commit substantial resources to translating the records of their operations into language (and non-English languages) that citizens and the general circulation media can readily understand.

6. Correctable

When citizens or media people know that such-and-such a vote went a different way than official records purport it did, or consumers know that some product never performed as stated by the corporation that made it, there needs to be a mechanism in place for them to submit their proposed corrections and for these submissions to be seriously considered by the organization and, if valid, to have the data changed.

7. Evolving

As times and conditions and technology change, the means for collecting, correlating, data mining, storing and distributing the information in transparency data bases need to keep pace, so that the latest information and the latest means of communicating it are made available to everyone who

wants to know.

8. Open Source

Open source software refers to computer operating systems and applications where the actual software code that makes them run is available to people for examination and improvement. Using open source software to support transparency makes it harder to hide important data. Also, the open source model, involving the collective involvement of users rather than their passive receipt of mysteriously-prepared finished products that exclude their participation, provides a constructive way of approaching the transparency process itself.

9. Cumulative and Comprehensive

Transparency databases need to go back to the origins of the organization that wants to make itself transparent. The minutes of the first meeting need to be as readily available as those of the latest, as well as records of everything that happened in between.

10. Pro-Active

Transparency needs to be at the top of an organization's agenda. The transparent institution should take the initiative in making information about itself available to its constituents, rather than relegate the transparency process to an obscure and lowly corner of its operations, merely providing "pro-forma transparency" that puts the data in a "virtual basement" or "virtual attic" where interested parties need to search long and hard to find it. Passive, or passive-aggressive, transparency is no transparency at all.

11. Free

Charging people for information designed to make a government agency or a corporation transparent contradicts the very idea of making this information easily accessible to all. Making itself transparent is a cost of doing business that needs to be borne by the agency or company itself and not imposed on its constituents.

12. Good-natured

Transparency is a right enjoyed by the constituents (citizens, customers, community members) of an organization, not a privilege to be reluctantly and stingily doled out on its own timetable and in a manner that it feels best suits its own needs. Corporations and government organizations should willingly

and enthusiastically “go transparent” because the citizens and customers that make their existence possible and whom they exist to serve deserve it.

Marc Strassman is President, Etopia; Executive Director, Coalition for HRX and Citizens United for Excellence in E-Government; host of Etopia Talk, a web-based talk show; and the losing high-tech candidate for Mayor of the San Fernando Valley in the recent failed secession election in the City of Los Angeles. He is also the author of “A Dozen Things that Excellent E-Government Should Be,” attached. He’s transparent himself, and accessible by e-mail at: hrx@adelphia.net.

Informational Asymmetry, Power, Privacy, and Transparency

By Marc Strassman
President, Etopia
hrx@adelphia.net

November 30, 2002

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HAMLET, Act 2 Scene 2

... : what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN Prison, my lord!

HAMLET Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ Then is the world one.

HAMLET A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst...

When politicians commission polls and convene focus groups to find out what voters look for in campaign slogans, and then use this knowledge to spoon feed these same voters their preferred slogans as a sign of their “leadership,” while keeping secret the means and methods they use to get themselves elected, they are leveraging informational asymmetry to their own advantage.

When the “merchants of cool” at MTV arrange to position VPs of marketing casually on the bedroom floors of typical teens to hear the intimate details for their preferences in clothes, CDs, and sex, without letting the teens sit in on their own strategic planning and marketing meetings, then use what they’ve learned under cover of their own secrecy to launch marketing campaigns to sell teens low self-esteem/coolness and selected garments, recordings, beverages, and the lifestyles made up of same, they are using

informational asymmetry to expand their gross revenues and power.

When the United States Government undertakes to collect, store, correlate, and data mine every person's banking, shopping, credit, media, medical, working, and recreational habits and transactions, while holding this data secret, while instigating secret wiretaps authorized in secret judicial proceedings, but refuses to allow citizens or media access to the overall principles or specific facts of these operations, it is most certainly building its power by taking advantage of the informational asymmetry it has established, as a matter of law, and justified in the name of counter-terrorism, as it once justified similar, but less extensive, informational intrusions in the name of anti-communism and "national security."

The English Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham and the French Deconstructionist Michel Foucault have, in a sense, collaborated across time and space to instruct us on the philosophical underpinnings of the power and the danger of this "informational asymmetry."

The Panopticon

The [Panopticon](#) of Jeremy Bentham is an architectural figure which "incorporates a tower central to an annular building that is divided into cells, each cell extending the entire thickness of the building to allow inner and outer windows. The occupants of the cells . . . are thus backlit, isolated from one another by walls, and subject to scrutiny both collectively and individually by an observer in the tower who remains unseen. Toward this end, Bentham envisioned not only venetian blinds on the tower observation ports but also mazelike connections among tower rooms to avoid glints of light or noise that might betray the presence of an observer."

The Panopticon thus allows seeing without being seen. 'Such asymmetry of seeing-without-being-seen is, in fact, the very essence of power for [Foucault](#) because ultimately, the power to dominate rests on the *differential* possession of knowledge' ("[Subject](#)" 223).

"According to Foucault, the new visibility or surveillance afforded by the Panopticon was of two types: The [synoptic](#) and the [analytic](#). The Panopticon, in other words, was designed to ensure a 'surveillance which would be both global and individualizing'"

([Power/Knowledge](#) 148)

From [Barton and Barton](#), "[Modes of Power](#)" (139-41).

In short, to be seen by unseen eyes is to be disempowered to the extent of that seeing, while the unseen seer is similarly and reciprocally empowered by that transaction/relationship.

This was certainly shown to be true in the recent case of the Washington area sniper, who himself expressed his perception of how putting people into his cross-hairs prior to murdering them made him feel: as he wrote on the back of a tarot card which he left for the police to find: "I am God."

For architectural drawings and more on Foucault's explanation of the how the Panopticon is supposed to work, see:

<http://cartome.org/panopticon1.htm>

For David Engberg's conception of a "Virtual Panopticon," see:

<http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/impact/f96/Projects/dengberg/>

For an historical/technical/deconstructionist proposal for "reverse engineering the Panopticon," by Deborah Natsios, see:

<http://cartome.org/reverse-panopticon.htm>

The technology to build a specific and concrete Panopticon existed when Bentham first proposed it as a model for prisons in 1791. The Panopticon as a metaphor for a "total-surveillance society," was intelligible in 1975 when Foucault published "Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison," which contains his analysis and elaboration of Bentham's ideas about this conceptual structure.

But it is only now, when the technology has become advanced enough and the perceived need for self-protection has become great enough to fund its development, acquisition, and deployment that the possibility of actually building and operating an all-seeing, all-knowing, all-pervading, all-encompassing Omni-opticon has arisen.

The technology necessary to monitor everyone, collect all the data they generate, store it, analyze it and prepare it for consideration by the data overlords is dual-use technology. It can be used by the people to watch the government; and it can be used by the government to watch the people (or both). Computer and Internet technology is of the essence in this discussion.

Last Halloween, I had a chance to comment on the dual-use dichotomy of information technology on a local radio show:

... I've been working since about 1995 to convince the government to use the Internet and related technologies to empower people, so they could vote over the Internet, so they could sign initiative petitions over the Internet. These were designed to take money out of politics and give more power to the people to decide how their government would make policy. I've been recently working on trying to convince the City

government to provide websites for all the Neighborhood Councils in Los Angeles. I've spent almost ten days trying to get an e-mail through to the Office of Homeland Security, which doesn't seem to have a phone number or a web address, to convince it that it should build websites in all of the counties in the country to provide a means for people to get authoritative and up-to-date information about things that bother them. I haven't heard from them.

On the other hand, we see here that the Government, [through] Carnivore and related systems, they're poised, they're ready, they've been prepared, they're taking advantage of the situation to implement systems to use technology to surveil people, to sort of disempower them. And I'd like to get more listeners' comments on this paradox: that the Internet is not viable, it is not acceptable to use to empower people but it is acceptable for the government to use it to disempower people.

Recorded October 31, 2001, on "Talk of the City" with Kittie Felde on KPCC, 89.3 FM, Pasadena, California

All of these takes on the Panopticon idea highlight how transparency and privacy are reciprocal values. To make oneself (or to be forced to become) transparent is to lose just that much privacy. The issue to be decided (or not) politically is who or what is to be transparent and who will retain their privacy.

The dozen things that excellent transparency should be, about which I recently wrote, are intended to set a standard for corporate and government institutions. Corporate and governmental transparency dictates that, as institutions, these organizations need to give up some of their privacy.

For their part, corporations and governments, through the programs of surveillance and data collection and analysis they undertake, strive to make individuals transparent to them, by peeling away layers of their privacy.

Science fiction writer and social commentator David Brin argues that the answer to this confrontation is for everything to be transparent, both the activities of the citizens and the surveillance and monitoring by the government:

<http://www.privacyfoundation.org/privacywatch/report.asp?id=79&action=0>

It might help all sides in the coming debate over reciprocal vs. uni-directional transparency if they could add a certain understanding of the historical context and philosophical underpinnings of this issue to their own demands for consideration solely of what they perceive to be their own immediate self interest. An examination of the ideas included in, and pointed at, in this essay may be helpful in doing so.

Prologue to the Surveillance Coming On

By Marc Strassman
President, Etopia
hxr@adelphia.net

December 1, 2002

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...And even the like precursor of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on...

From Act I, Scene 1 of "Hamlet," lines 121-123

We all know how much fun filmmaker and social critic Michael Moore, and, eventually, his audience, had due to his going around the US trying to embarrass gun users, gun lobbyists, and gun sellers. I thought I could have almost as much fun doing the same with those people and organizations that will participate and profit from the upcoming Surveillance State sought by the Bush Administration and authorized by the United States Congress.

Where will the data to be mined by the Total Information Awareness team come from? Willie Sutton said he robbed banks because "that's where the money was." It's only logical to assume that the data miners working for convicted felon and inveterate pipe smoker John Poindexter will go looking "where the data is." This should include banks, credit reporting agencies, insurance companies, medical records, retailers, police records, legal files, and, if they want to really track troublemakers and terrorists to their lair, the chat rooms of AOL, Yahoo!, and MSN, the Microsoft Network.

I figured I'd start with the least fortified of these data sources, the chat rooms. I called Yahoo! but haven't yet heard back from Fleishman-Hillard, the public relations agency they use to stay opaque to the public and media. I got a lot further with Microsoft, owner-operator of MSN, the chat "community" represented in the media by the guy in the butterfly suit.

Microsoft, now already on extremely good terms with the Bush Administration after the almost-complete resolution, on terms very acceptable to the Redmond Administration, of the anti-trust lawsuit originally brought against Bill's Software Trust by the Clinton Administration, told me to talk to the people at Waggener Edstrom, their opaquing front-end.

I contacted Waggener Edstrom and asked if they had any comment about transmission to the Total Information Awareness team of the content and metadata of the chats going on

in the MSN chat rooms. Here, in its entirety, is their response, which arrived in my office by e-mail on November 27 , 2002:

Hi Marc,

Thank you again for your call yesterday. Unfortunately, we just don't have anything to provide for your story at this time, but thank you for giving us this opportunity.

Happy Thanksgiving to you,
Erica

I'm looking forward to hearing from Yahoo!.

Message 75 of 75 | [Previous](#) | [Next](#) [[Up Thread](#)] [Message Index](#)

– Msg #

Go

From: Virtual Orange <virtualorange@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Dec 6, 2002 11:41 am

Subject: RealNetworks Audio Interview about Helix

Dear Subscriber,

To hear an interview I recently conducted with a spokesperson for RealNetworks about their Helix line of streaming media products, go to:

<http://www.lpbn.org:8080/ramgen/e2.rm?usehostname>

Regards,

Marc Strassman

Some Final Remarks

(December 5, 2002)

If you've been paying close attention to the story, you'll have seen that it's been evolving from the general and theoretical to the practical and concrete. The long abstract discourses of the mid-90s have become the hyper-concise sound bites of the early 00s, as the modes of presentation have changed from text and unrecorded speech to photos, streaming audio and, finally, streaming video.

But the more the method of informational delivery has changed, the less have the results. There is still no Internet voting in the United States, although Great Britain seems determined to press ahead on it. There are no Smart Initiatives anywhere. E-government, especially in the form of vast public/government expenditures for personal surveillance, monitoring and data mining, is expanding everywhere.

In part to do what I can to accentuate the positive applications of technology to make government more capable of serving human needs and less capable of enslaving us, I'll be organizing, starting in January, 2003, support for federal legislation to expand e-government and broadband access as Executive Director of the "Coalition for HRX," which will be working with U.S. Representative Robert Andrews (D-NJ) to refine and pass his e-government and broadband extension bill. You can join the mailing list for this project by sending an empty e-mail to:

hr_x-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

My partial success in reaching the public as a candidate for Mayor of Valley City sometimes makes me think I could have even wider and greater success by running for President in 2004, especially if the charismatic visionary Gary Hart decides not to run.

The biggest initial obstacle to that would, as usual, be getting on the ballot, which requires a great number of voter signatures on petitions. A successful nationwide campaign in 2003 to legalize Smart Initiatives in the several states, however, could make getting those signatures (online) much easier and also lay the organizational groundwork for actually collecting the required signatures later on.

I am talking to companies that sell digital certificates and single sign-on authentication systems with a view to convincing them to support my efforts in this area, telling them mainly that it will be good for their businesses, not for my presidential aspirations. Stay tuned.