

Jaromil's Research 2010

Jaromil's Journal of Musings

December 28, 2010

Here is the research journal for 2010.

If you like to support me writing more on this journal: please donate money¹ (you can also be mentioned in our final book publication). BTW, you can also flattr me²... thanks! :^)

Research 2010 wasn't public until October, mostly because of lack of time while I'm personally busy surviving through an age of rapid decay for Europe, our hi-tech continent becoming a Kafkaian panoptikon.

However, I took notes of many events for this year, some of them are published here, some not yet; I'm doing my best, thanks for all your support.

The last days of Jack Sheppard

Fri, 29 Jan 2010

A new worthwhile film is out, concerned with the historical moment and relation of finance and class violence: "*The last days of Jack Sheppard*" by Anja Kirschner and David Panos, also taking critical inspiration from historical accounts found in Peter Linebaugh's book "*The London Hanged*".

On the Mute magazine was published an interesting response by prof. Linebaugh, outing some criticism juggled between him and the film-makers, which regardless of polemical tones ends up discussing some very interesting aspects of history and the process of subjectivation taking place among populations oppressed at the times of the slave trade, industrial revolution and more recent anti-capitalist movements.

It is a perfect commentary for facts often neglected and truly well related to the contemporary financial crisis and consequent bail-out solutions adopted. Making our mouths wet for watching the film, here below the incipit of prof.Linebaugh's article:

In August 1971 Richard Nixon devalued the dollar and suspended its convertibility to gold. The gold standard had been one of the pillars of the capitalist order according to Karl Polanyi, the others being the balance of power, the self-regulating market, and the liberal state. A few days later George Jackson, who had been imprisoned 11 years earlier for stealing \$70 from a gas station, was assassinated in San Quentin prison, a cold blooded murder which led directly to the seizure by the inmates of the maximum security penitentiary in Attica, New York. Notoriously, Governor David Rockefeller suppressed the uprising with the worst massacre since the Indian wars of the 19th century. 39 prisoners and four guards were killed making a total of 43 mortalities. (William Calley, the perpetrator of My Lai massacre of 1968 which killed 20 people was pardoned by Nixon earlier in the year.) Clearly, the liberal state was going the way of gold.

While there is not a direct causal relation between the rebellion of the incarcerated and the abandonment of gold, this kind of relationship was not unprecedented. The conjuncture between monetary disruption by the ruling class and defiance of the legal apparatus by the other class had parallels at the birth of finance capitalism in the period 1690–1725. By comparing the two situations perhaps we can learn something, and a movie may help us do this.

¹<http://pledgie.com/campaigns/9570>

²<http://api.flattr.com/button/click/77c7288d39522d3f93b2dcb1a79625d0>

The gallows and money went together by a logic that is considered in a film by Anja Kirschner and David Panos called *The Last Days of Jack Sheppard*. The film is sponsored by the Arts Council of England, the Scottish Arts Council, the Henry Moore Foundation, and commissioned by the Chisenhale Gallery in London and the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow. As we shall see it is an art film in other senses than its sponsorship. Jack Sheppard was a carpenter and thief who frequently and famously escaped prison until he was hanged at the Tyburn gallows in London in November 1724. He was also the subject of the first chapter in my book, *The London Hanged*.

You can go read the whole debacle, full of historical accounts and observations about the role of the ruling class and its imposed sense of un/justice online on *MetaMute*³.

Symbian lies on open source?

Sat, 6 Feb 2010

Symbian is Open Source - Really? via Harald Welte's blog on 2/4/10

In recent news, the Symbian Foundation announced that "All 108 packages containing the source code of the Symbian platform can now be downloaded from Symbian's developer web site". This is great news!

This morning I tried to look at the parts most interesting to me: *phonesrv* (implementing call engine, cell broadcast and SIM toolkit APIs) and *poc* (implementing push-to-talk). Their pages don't have the usual "source code" tab at the bottom right which links to mercurial and tarball download pages!

Either I'm too stupid, or I am unable to find any source code for those two components. I'm quite sure something essential like the API's for making phone calls are considered part of the Symbian platform. So how does that match with the statement that all packages containing the Symbian platform can now be downloaded?

Crypto SMS

Fri, 19 Mar 2010

<https://cryptosms.org/>

Online normative observatory

Mon, 22 Mar 2010

<http://www.normattiva.it/static/index.html>

Normattiva è un nuovo servizio che lo Stato italiano fornisce ai cittadini. Si tratta di una banca dati, accessibile a tutti e consultabile gratuitamente, che contiene i testi delle leggi statali vigenti aggiornate in tempo reale

Sorting contributions

Mon, 12 Apr 2010

<http://lwn.net/Articles/222773/> sorting contributions is not a simple topic # as pointed out in this article <http://lwn.net/Articles/222773/>

```
git log --pretty="format:%an %ae" $1 \ sort uniq -c sort -n -r sed -e 's/^ [0-9] //'g'
```

Poortgebouw wins courtcase

Fri, 16 Apr 2010

<http://indymedia.nl/nl/2010/04/66526.shtml>

³http://www.metamute.org/en/content/jack_s_back_in_the_movies_at_last

Machines predicting humans

Thu, 22 Apr 2010

Klaus Walher, portavoce della compagnia aerea Lufthansa, ? un uomo che crede nella scienza. Eppure, osservando il cielo europeo desolato e sgombro, lamenta la mancanza d'intuizione e di buon senso. Walher vuole solo volare. La sua opposizione al blocco aereo ? un passo importante nella storia della "critica della tecnologia", una pietra miliare nella storia della societ? moderna che si priva del potere dei modelli matematici da essa stessa creati.

Le compagnie aeree, naturalmente, difendono prima di tutto i loro interessi. Per? Walher non ? uno che sacrifica la sicurezza sull'altare del profitto. Anche chi non ha confidenza con i voli aerei, in questi giorni, ha la sensazione che la nube invisibile che paralizza il traffico non sia fatta di cenere e polvere, ma da un mucchio infinito di dati. Le conseguenze scaturite oggi da un'esplosione vulcanica domani potrebbero innescarsi per qualsiasi altro imprevisto, geologico, economico o sociale che sia. Una simulazione informatica paralizza la circolazione aerea, con perdite di centinaia di milioni di euro al giorno. Cosa potr? accadere domani? Quale sar? il prezzo da pagare?

<http://www.presseurop.eu/it/content/article/234591-nelle-mani-del-computer>

—
Important to be clear that this is not *neighborhood* predictions, like Crimespotting, which have problems of their own, but predictions about whether a *person* will commit a crime.

(<http://gizmodo.com/5517231/crime-prediction-software-is-here-and-its-a-very-bad-idea>)

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/Florida-Department-of-bw-1587995596.html?x=3D0\&.v=3D1>
CHICAGO—(BUSINESS WIRE)—SPSS, an IBM (NYSE: IBM) Company, today announced that the Florida State Department of Juvenile Justice selected IBM predictive analytics software to reduce recidivism by determining which juveniles are likely to reoffend. Identified at-risk youth can then be placed in programs specific to the best course of treatment to ensure offenders do not re-enter the juvenile justice system. ...

IBM recently also announced that the Ministry of Justice in the United Kingdom uses predictive analytics to assess the likelihood of prisoners reoffending upon their release to help improve public safety. With predictive technology from IBM, the Ministry of Justice is analyzing hidden trends and patterns within the data. IBM SPSS predictive analytics has helped identify whether offenders with specific problems such as drug and alcohol misuse are more likely to reoffend than other prisoners.

...

Deepak Advani, vice president of predictive analytics at IBM, said:

Predictive analytics gives government organizations worldwide a highly-sophisticated and intelligent source to create safer communities by identifying, predicting, responding to and preventing criminal activities. It gives the criminal justice system the ability to draw upon the wealth of data available to detect patterns, make reliable projections and then take the appropriate action in real time to combat crime and protect citizens.

Digital prohibitionists

Thu, 3 Jun 2010

Same old censorship arguments since ages now, but with a better website it seems: smile29.eu⁴ is setup by the prohibitionist cast at the EU parliament asking a "low latency" mechanism that would "signal child pornography" semi-automatically...

Yet another field of analysis for the false-positive theory?

Oh yea, machines analysis will go faster and save our children!

Meh.

Dutch Gov Troika

Fri, 18 Jun 2010

BWO Tjebbe van Tijen

⁴<http://smile29.eu/>

DUTCH GOVERNMENT TROIKA 1 + 1 = 3 – the non-mathematical logic of democracy

This is the coalition government most seriously studied in the coming days: two big winners trying to persuade one big loser to combine forces. Compared to the elections of 2006 VVD grew from 22 to 31 seats, PVV from 9 to 24 and CDA lost 20 seats and now has 21 representatives in parliament. Historically speaking the actual argument – supported by almost all parties – that governmental participation of the PVV party should be taken most serious as they have seen the biggest growth in votes, shows how party politics is based on short memory. The oscillating favours of Dutch voters in the last two decades resulted in the national elections of the year 2003 in sudden growth of votes for the Socialist Party (SP). They grew from 9 to 25 seats which is one seat more of sudden growth than the now triumphant PVV party of Geert Wilders. In 2003 the bright red horse of the SP was maneuvered out of government within days. Nobody taking their victory serious. Where the PVV has grown in 2010 elections with 15 seats to a total of 24, the SP had grown in 2003 with 16 seats to a total of 25 (of which they have lost now 10 seats). These are the vicissitudes of the parliamentary system in which the act of counting and the value of numbers is most peculiar and has its own non-mathematical logic. As ‘a majority’ in our actual democratic system = 1/2 the numbers total number of seats +1, the ‘ars combinatoria’ of selecting party horses that will pull the ‘wagon of state’ will at one moment in history not value an electoral success, while at another moment prize a defeat. Most parties in the scattered landscape of Dutch party politics enter the election process with blind faith and false hope that they will gain enough votes to form a government with one or two friends. Most of the party leaders refuse to tell the voters on forehand who their friends are or will be. The most heard argument has been that is “you voters who decide.” After the elections democracy ends up with a decision process of wheeling and dealing directed by a hereditary monarch and a lackey appointed by her for this occasion. “De kiezer heeft gesproken” (the voter has spoken) is the expression of the day, while on the basis of marginal differences in actual votes, unpredictable government coalitions are wrought which have measures and policies in stall that will go against that what the majority of the voters have tried to express at the one brief moment in time that they could mark their ballot-paper. After one month of staged political debates on television and party leaders feigning ‘direct democracy’ on twitter, it is back to ‘back-room policies’.

version with image and explanatory link on Dutch party system can be found on The Limping Messenger⁵ blog.

How the Warlords took over EU in 2012

Mon, 21 Jun 2010

BWO John Thackara:

I found a chart in Aviation Week which is almost a trade magazine of the military industrial complex, that included these numbers for per capita military spending:

- U.S.: \$545.3 billion, that’s roughly \$45,500 per head of the population. - U.K.: \$63.2 billion, or \$34,800 per head. - France: \$60.3 billion, or \$32,100 per head. - Germany: \$41.8 billion, or \$33,800 per head. Then I found a study that concludes that the United States spent \$1,780 per head on education in 2001 (France, The Netherlands and Canada each spent more than \$1,200 per capita). Hmmm. Turning to culture and the arts, the best I could find is a perplexing web database that appears to show that cultural expenditure per capita in Spain is euro 135, compared to Germany which, in 2007, spent 99 euros per capita. In round numbers, then, Germany appears to spend 25,000 euros per person on defence, versus about 100 euros per head on culture. I have to assume that the gap in the US and UK, were the numbers to be available, would be a good deal wider. As I said: insane numbers. I distract you (and myself) with these numbers mainly because, in the years ahead, spending on the things that we do care about -

⁵<http://limpingmessenger.wordpress.com/2010/06/15/dutch-government-troika-1-1-3-the-non-mathematical-logic-of-democracy/>

education, culture, sustainability - looks certain to plummet. In the UK, for example, commentators are talking gravely about public spending cuts of 10, 15, or 20 percent. Insiders tell me that cuts will be 40 percent or more, in real terms, over the coming few years. Large cultural and educational institutions will suck in what little public funding is available. Government funding for small, grassroots activities will dry up almost completely.

Full article online here⁶.

The Artvertiser open sources

Tue, 22 Jun 2010

The Artvertiser source code is now available, licensed under the GPLv3.

Introduction The Artvertiser is an Improved Reality platform, designed for the live substitution of advertisements in a video stream with alternative 2D content. The code was initially developed by Julian Oliver before being significantly improved by Damian Stewart. A typical application of The Artvertiser at work might be the Product Replacement of street billboards with 2D art using a laptop with webcam or camera-enabled mobile device. You might also want to have your own personal exhibition in the Louvre, substituting well known paintings with your own creations and inviting others to enjoy the show. Counter-propaganda operations are also well suited to the platform, like changing the imagery of a disliked political campaigner before uploading the recorded result for all to see. Alternatively, it can be used to product replace planar images in archival video, like a Hollywood movie or TV advert, using popular films as an 'exhibition surface'. You can see a couple of examples of The Artvertiser at work using our own specially crafted digital binoculars, The Billboard Interception Unit, on the project website:

<http://theartvertiser.com> **The Code** The entire project tree exists as a git repository, cloned like so on your local system:

```
git clone git://repo.or.cz/The-Artvertiser.git
```

The code should currently build on any modern Linux-based OS with the addition of a couple of dependencies and - thanks to Damian - should also compile on OS X with the correct prior tweaks in place. See the README file in the top-level directory for more information. A special 'mob' user has been set up allowing complete Read/Write access for anyone at all. Once you've cloned the repository as above, just:

```
git checkout mob
```

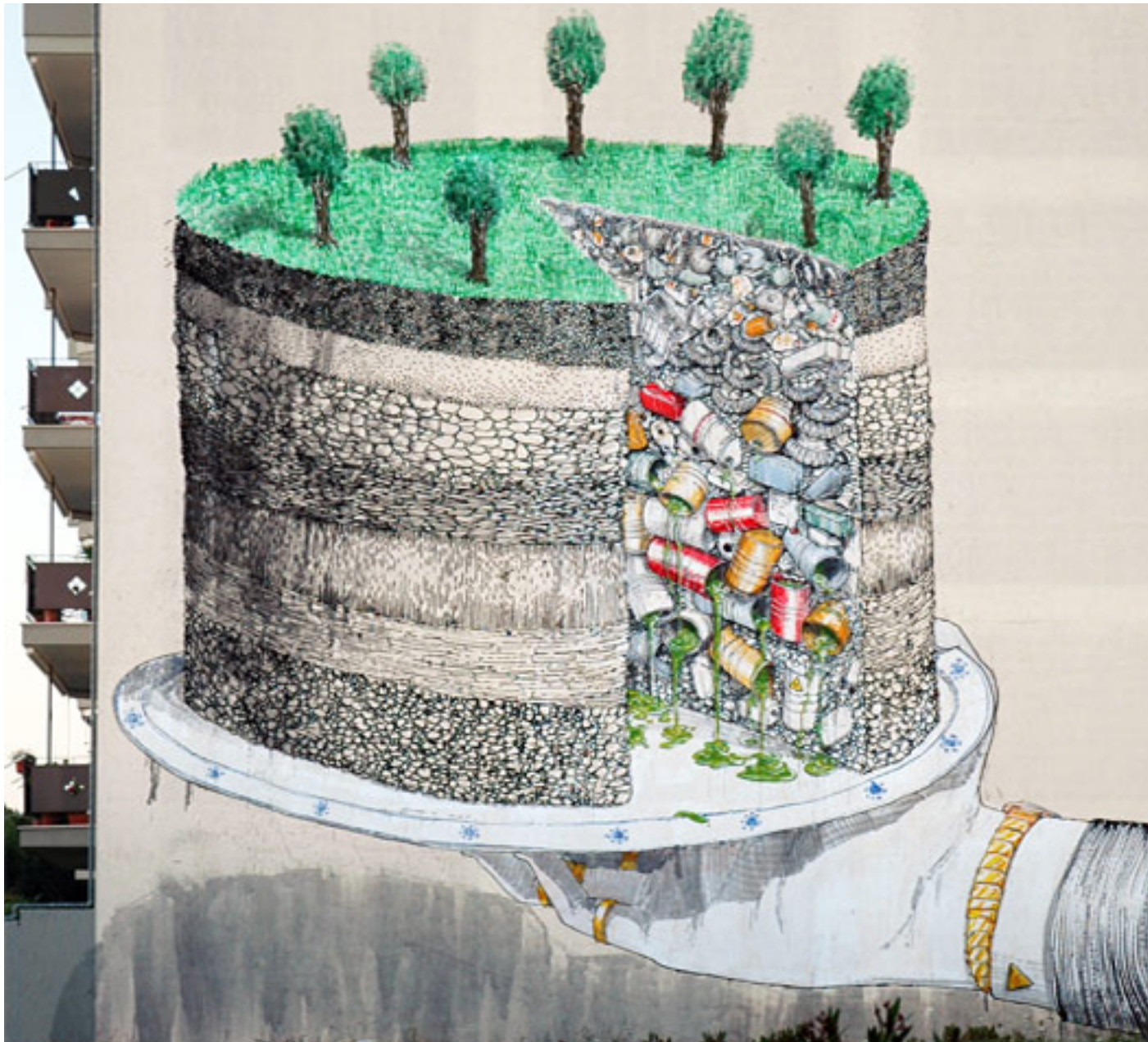
.. to move to the mob branch. It's all yours! We look forward to your improvements, forks, derivations and vandalisms. Happy (urban) hacking! Julian⁷ and Damian⁸

Economy and equality

Wed, 7 Jul 2010

The Insight Center for Community Economic Development in Oakland, California, has temporarily released a document named /LiftingAsWeClimb-InsightCenter-Spring2010.pdf/ (which went off the net shortly after its release) reporting that in USA the net average income of a white woman between 36 and 49 years old is \$42,600 while that of a colored woman of the same age is \$5.

Obviously that is even worse in Europe.



The cake is served

Fri, 16 Jul 2010

Graffiti artist Blu⁹ strikes a chord in his home country with a new giant mural in Grottaglie, Italy, famous for its olive trees, ancient ceramic tradition and new, ever-expanding waste dumps. As the artist's contribution to FAME Fest, a yearly event inviting top urban artists to create street and gallery works, Blu chose to highlight the town's growing problem with his work *É Pronta la Torta* (The Cake is Ready).

More on the artthreat article¹⁰.

⁶http://www.doorsofperception.com/archives/2010/03/culture_cuts.php

⁷<http://julianoliver.com>

⁸<http://frey.co.nz>

⁹<http://blublu.org/>

¹⁰http://artthreat.net/2010/07/blu_cake_mural/

Benjamin's briefcase

Sat, 24 Jul 2010

My friend Tiziano Bonini together with a team of passionate walking poets have realized the Benjamin Briefcase¹¹ project, an on-line and on-site intervention to commemorate the death of Walter Benjamin 70 years after his death, they hiked the mountain path from Spain to France that him and many other people clandestinely crossed during the war.

Un progetto on site/on line per ricordare Walter Benjamin, a 70 anni dalla sua morte, e tutti quelli che, come lui, hanno attraversato e attraversano i confini nazionali da clandestini.

Il progetto ha due dimensioni: Riscoprire il sentiero usato da Benjamin e da centinaia di clandestini per scappare dalla Francia, riscoprirne la storia e il territorio in cui è immerso. Ricordare Benjamin attraverso un'installazione invisibile: una valigia nella terra e un blog nella rete. Abbiamo camminato la Ruta Lister da Port Vendres a Port Bou, ritrovato il luogo dove Walter Benjamin passò la notte il 24 settembre del 1940, dormito sotto il cielo e sotterrato la nostra valigia.

Surprising Europe

Thu, 12 Aug 2010

What awaits an African when he tries to make a better life in Europe? Ssuuna Golooba, journalist from Uganda, was in Amsterdam when the Schiphol Fire happened (26th of October 2005). How could this happen? How was this possible? It took him four years to finish his film.

Today (Thursday 12) at 11.20 p.m. you can see Ssuuna Golooba's documentary film Surprising Europe on Nederland 2

More on the Surprising Europe website¹².

dot.com & totalitarian govns

Tue, 17 Aug 2010

BWO Felix Stalder:

What happened to the great showdown between freedom-loving tech-companies—who were supposed to depend on earning their users's trust by protecting their privacy—and authoritarian governments bent on all-around surveillance and censorship?

While initially there has been a lot of press about Google challenging the Chinese government, the reports have slowed to a trickle recently. From what I understand, China has renewed Google commercial license for another year or two, though it remains unclear under which conditions. This seems to indicate that the government got enough of what it wanted, or, that it doesn't see Internet-freedom as so threatening, after all. ¹³

And then there is RIM decision to cooperate fully with Saudi Arabia's authorities to prevent their email services to be banned in the country. Instead of protecting their users's privacy, RIM (the company that makes the Blackberry devices) agreed to "to locate three servers within Saudi Arabia, putting them under the jurisdiction of local security forces and thus removing the necessity of the planned ban." [2]

Quantum proof Crypto

Thu, 19 Aug 2010

KentuckyFC writes on slashdot¹⁴:

¹¹<http://www.benjaminbriefcase.com/>

¹²<http://www.surprisingeurope.com>

¹³see http://www.theregister.co.uk/2010/08/09/rim_saudi_arabia/ [2] see <http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2010/07/google-china-fiction/>

¹⁴<http://science.slashdot.org/story/10/08/18/1958226/1978-Cryptosystem-Resists-Quantum-Attack>

“In 1978, the CalTech mathematician Robert McEliece developed a cryptosystem based on the (then) new idea of using asymmetric mathematical functions to create different keys for encrypting and decrypting information. The security of these systems relies on mathematical steps that are easy to make in one direction but hard to do in the other. Today, popular encryption systems such as the RSA algorithm use exactly this idea. But in 1994, the mathematician Peter Shor dreamt up a quantum algorithm that could factorise much faster than any classical counterpart and so can break these codes. As soon as the first decent-sized quantum computer is switched on, these codes will become breakable. Since then, cryptographers have been hunting for encryption systems that will be safe in the post quantum world. Now a group of mathematicians have shown that the McEliece encryption system is safe against attack by Shor’s algorithm and all other known quantum algorithms. That’s because it does not depend on factorisation but gets its security from another asymmetric conundrum known as the hidden subgroup problem which they show is immune to all known quantum attacks.”

Artists make more money in File-Sharing Age

Wed, 15 Sep 2010

A recent article on torrentfreak recites¹⁵:

Artists Make More Money in File-Sharing Age Than Before It

An extensive study into the effect of digitalization on the music industry in Norway has shed an interesting light on the position of artists today, compared to 1999. While the music industry often talks about artists being on the brink of bankruptcy due to illicit file-sharing, the study found that the number of artists as well as their average income has seen a major increase in the last decade.

Every other month a new study addressing the link between music piracy and music revenues surfaces, but only a few really stand out. One of the most elaborate and complete studies conducted in recent times is the master thesis of Norwegian School of Management students Anders Sørbo and Richard Bjerkøe¹⁶.

In their thesis, the students take a detailed look at the different revenue streams of the music industry between 1999 and 2009. By doing so, they aim to answer the question of how the digitization of music – and the most common side-effect, piracy – have changed the economic position of the Norwegian music industry and Norwegian artists. The results are striking.

After crunching the music industry’s numbers the researchers found that total industry revenue grew from 1.4 billion Norwegian kroner in 1999 to 1.9 billion in 2009. After adjusting this figure for inflation this comes down to a 4% increase in revenues for the music industry in this time period. Admittedly, this is not much of a growth, but things get more interesting when the research zooms in on artist revenue.

In the same period when the overall revenues of the industry grew by only 4%, the revenue for artists alone more than doubled with an increase of 114%. After an inflation adjustment, artist revenue went up from 255 million in 1999 to 545 million kroner in 2009.

Some of the growth can be attributed to the fact that the number of artists increased by 28% in the same time period. However, per artist the yearly income still saw a 66% increase from 80,000 to 133,000 kroner between 1999 and 2009. In conclusion, one could say that artists are far better off now than they were before the digitization of music started.

(Written by Ernesto¹⁷)

¹⁵<http://torrentfreak.com/artists-make-more-money-in-file-sharing-age-than-before-100914/>

¹⁶<http://www.scribd.com/doc/37406039/Thesis-Bjerkoe-Sorbo>

¹⁷<http://torrentfreak.com/author/ernesto/>

Web 2.0 multiplying flaws

Wed, 22 Sep 2010

What the Web 2.0 buzzword is really about: using a browser as if it would be the desktop of an operating system. My views on this are mostly unprintable, I'll just limit myself to list some recent security flaws threatening the vast audience of Web2.0:

- XSSER¹⁸ javascript injection
- Evercookie¹⁹ cookie poisoning
- CSShack²⁰ history knocker

Google's "ethical dilemma" over taxes

Thu, 30 Sep 2010

As many other companies, Google is also hopping countries to bypass legal taxation systems.. anyone has heard of the /dutch sandwich/ before? while the tea party is advocating the legalization of tax evasion, that is already legalized in practice, at the price of corporate consulting.

Even if the tax avoidance structures are legal, not everyone considers them ethical. Google is "flying a banner of doing no evil, and then they're perpetrating evil under our noses," says Abraham J. Briloff, a professor emeritus of accounting at Baruch College who has examined Google's tax disclosures.

Google is called to loose ground on well settled financial crime practices that everyone else survives with... Here is an informative business week article²¹ mentioning how the World goes... until we change it - but then let me argue this change must be for everyone, ASAP.

RIP Benoît Mandelbrot

Thu, 14 Oct 2010

UN warns EU

Tue, 19 Oct 2010

Recently in Strasbourg, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon warned:

A dangerous trend is emerging, a new politics of polarization. Some play on people's fears, they accuse immigrants of violating European values.

Yet too often it is the accusers who subvert these values and thus the very idea of what it means to be a citizen of the European Union.

Europe's darkest chapters have been written in language such as this. Today the primary targets are immigrants of the Muslim faith, Europe cannot afford stereotyping that closes minds and breeds hatred, and the world cannot afford a Europe that does this.

In the meanwhile: chancellor Angela Merkel recently stated that the concept of multiculturalism had "absolutely failed" in Germany, while the government coalition in the Netherlands now include, besides the Christians and the terror-strategy party VVD, also Geert Wilders' PVV most famous for his anti-Islam hate campaigns.

Oi vEuropa!

¹⁸<http://xsser.sf.net>

¹⁹<http://samy.pl/evercookie/>

²⁰<http://samy.pl/csshack/>

²¹http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/10_44/b4201043146825_page_2.htm

The Netherlands stops commemorating the Schiphol Fire

Tue, 26 Oct 2010

Today on Radio Netherlands Worldwide they said²²:

Some 40 people attended a commemoration ceremony at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport on Tuesday evening for the 11 people who died in what's known as the Schiphol Fire. As public interest in the memorial is diminishing, it has been decided that this year's ceremony will be the last official one to commemorate the victims.

This is a tragic mistake. Dutch authorities are so myopic they don't recognize the progressive loss of trust between them and the communities of migrants (and workers) still aloud to exist in the country, especially following the outcome of the court case on the Schiphol Fire held in Amsterdam, which held no authority responsible.

Here below the direct response given by some survivors of the fire:

Brothers and sisters

some people today made a commemoration of the Schiphol Fire. They did it in the town hall of Hoofddorp. They say it is the last official commemoration of the fire. We want to let you know that we don't do official commemorations. We don't want to do this together with the authorities who can do no better than build a new prison for undocumented migrants. They say this one will be more humane. We don't think that a prison for undocumented migrants can ever be humane. Migrants are normal and want more freedom Papa Sakho, Jo van der Spek and Ben Duivenvoorden Migrant to Migrant²³ Amsterdam, 26 oktober 2010

More info on the Schiphol Fire is now found on the Schipholwakes.nl²⁴ website.

Between the bars

Fri, 29 Oct 2010

Just met Mako in Barcelona, he show me this amazing project: Between the bars²⁵ blogging letters from incarcerated people.

Between the Bars is a weblog platform for prisoners, through which the 1% of America which is behind bars can tell their stories. Since prisoners are routinely denied access to the Internet, we enable them to blog by scanning letters. We aim to provide a positive outlet for creativity, a tool to assist in the maintenance of social safety nets, an opportunity to forge connections between prisoners and non-prisoners, and a means to promote non-criminal identities and personal expression. We hope to improve prisoner's lives, and help to reduce recidivism.

Plug in walls

Sun, 31 Oct 2010

Aram Bartholl's new artwork Dead Drops²⁶ builds an anonymous exchange network simply made with usb storage plugs embedded in walls.

More than ever, this project offers an inspiring metaphor of the gap between digital and analog: the time when the access to digital information networks hits the street level has come... the walls are whispering data.

However for the long term I'd suggest using female plugs.

²²<http://www.rnw.nl/english/bulletin/victims-schiphol-fire-commemorated>

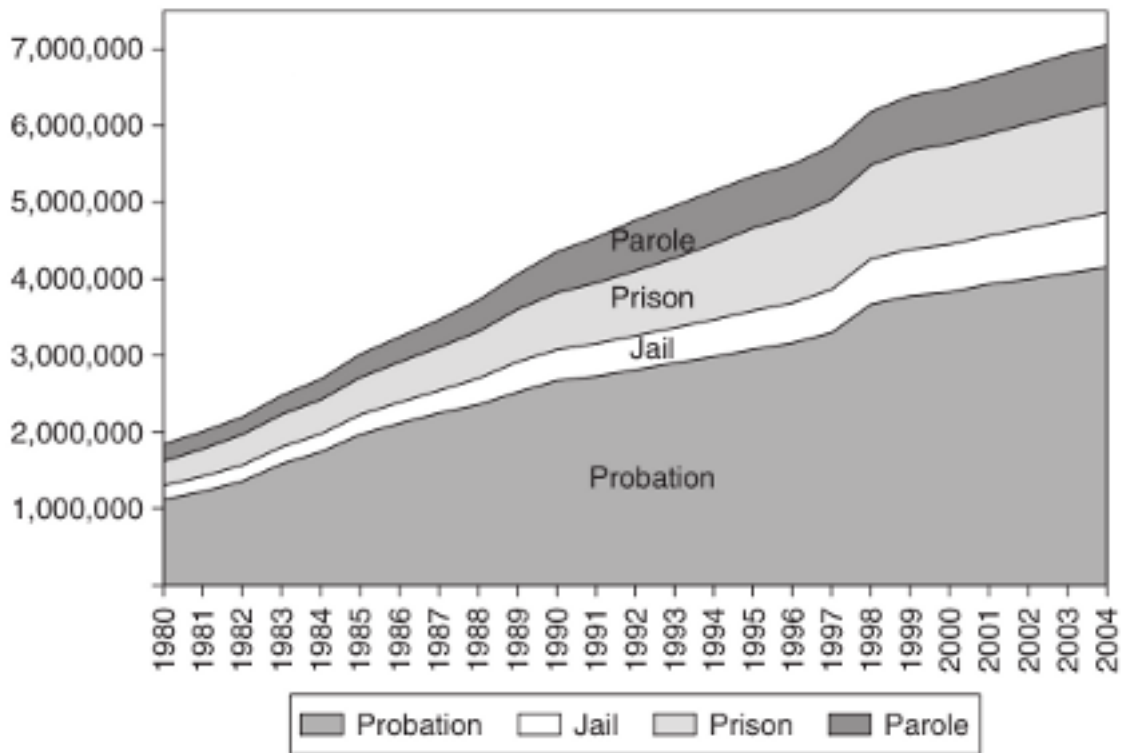
²³<http://m2m.streamtime.org>

²⁴<http://www.schipholwakes.nl>

²⁵<http://betweenthebars.org>

²⁶<http://datenform.de/blog/dead-drops-preview/>

FIGURE 1
CORRECTIONAL POPULATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1980-2004



Server raid in Norway

Fri, 5 Nov 2010

One server of the autistici/inventati²⁷ R* network (distributed and highly resilient host architecture for Italian activists) has been raided by the Norwegian police today²⁸, apparently on the mandate of Italian authorities running an investigation.

Here a report in German²⁹ while below follows the communicate of the Aut/Inv collective:

It happens, since notoriously police doesn't know how to aim properly: shoot in the crowd, you might eventually hit your target. Exactly as when they run round-ups, bringing havoc to whole streets as they look for something that might not even exist. The Italian postal police has a bad habit of rummaging in hundreds or even thousands of people's personal data just to fine one particular message. It has happened again with the server the A/I collective keeps in Norway: its disks have been entirely cloned for an investigation we still cannot know anything about. It is likely that A/I is not directly implied in this supposed enquiry, but whatever may be happening, our users' data (which were mostly encrypted) have been acquired by someone who could at most show a warrant for one specific search. It is the principle of hitting hundreds of people to pinpoint one of them: and while they're at it, seizing all data is too much of a temptation; after all if you won't find what you are looking for, you'll have a prize at least to show your police friends. When such things happen in China or in Iran, crowds of privacy champions pour into the streets to protest against the "regime" spying on its citizens. But if it happens in front of them, they are distracted, perhaps due to the media hype on the petty scandals that haunt this petty country. Such occurrences require us, all of us, to react quickly, learning to protect our privacy as well as protesting against

²⁷<http://www.autistici.org/en/>

²⁸<http://cavallette.autistici.org/2010/11/6938>

²⁹<http://annalist.noblogs.org/post/2010/11/06/autistici-server-beschlagnahmt/>



electronic surveillance, which, clumsy as its claims may be, is in any case unjustified and repressive. It is also interesting to note that there was no need for this operation: every time we have been asked for logs or information, we have always answered—it is not our fault, if the data they need do not exist or if they find them useless. Actually, we find this is one of our merits. And we think it is also a merit that the R* Plan has allowed us to restore the services that were hit by this raid in no more than 24 hours: for 5 years now we have been telling our users that our aim is avoiding the destruction of our services, while in the meantime we have also realized and tried to tell everybody that each single user is responsible for her own privacy, which depends on your intelligence when you write and read and on your accuracy in never entrusting this fundamental aspect of your life to someone else. Apart from the mailing lists archives, our disks were encrypted, but now they have been copied, and with time no encryption system is unbreakable. So don't delude yourselves in a false sense of safety. Support the battle that we will launch as we did after the first crackdown on our server: spread the news we will publish, fight against any restriction to your freedom of communication. Unlike the police, we want to educate hundreds to hit one—the genius at the postal police who thought that copying 2000 people's data could be a good idea to find nothing at all.

DYNDY is out!

Sat, 13 Nov 2010

This project took a year to be conceptualized. Before its release has been known to a few subjects under the codename: “O’ SISTEMONE”.

Visit the DYNDY website³⁰ and read about our launch in De Balie, Amsterdam³¹.

³⁰<http://dyndy.net>

³¹<http://www.dyndy.net/2010/11/launch-at-ecommons2-in-de-balie-amsterdam/>



Why the Aut/Inv server was raided in Norway?

Wed, 24 Nov 2010

Now finally it seems the Aut/Inv collective got to know the reason why one of their servers was raided on the 5th of November in Norway, an act performed by the Norwegian police on behalf of an international mandate of investigation from Italy, which disrupted the private email and web publishing services for thousands of users, also potentially endangering their privacy.

Here below I'm quoting their communicate³² published today on *noblogs*:

A/I's Norwegian crackdown in a nutshell

The Autistici/Inventati collective and the Investici Association, which represents the collective in legal and bureaucratic matters, are a group of people who maintain and develop electronic communication services for individuals, associations, informal groups and movements and, among their particular aims, defend the freedom of expression and privacy.

The story we are going to tell started in Avezano, Italy, between the 9th December 2008 and the 30th March 2009. A lawsuit gave rise to an investigation where it is maintained that Gianluca Jannone, leader of the neo-fascist group "Casa Pound", and Ercole Marchionni, founder of "casa pound Avezano", suffered threats and slander. In particular, there are charges concerning a message painted on a wall, some red paint on a door bell and some texts published on abruzzo.indymedia.org and orsa.noblogs.org, claiming that no public space should be given to declared neo-fascist groups.

³²<http://cavallette.noblogs.org/2010/11/7029>

After this lawsuit, public prosecutor Stefano Gallo activated together with the Avezzano police office, and the case reached the postal police in Milan. In August 2009 the Investici Association (and therefore the Autistici/Inventati collective) was called to witness, and formally declared in front of police agents that no log files linked with the orsa canaglie . net mailbox were kept in its servers, nor did the association have any personal data regarding the subscriber of the mailbox.

The Avezzano police office sent a rogatory letter (with charges of threats!!!) to Norway, Holland and Switzerland, asking the local authorities to contact the providers where Autistici/Inventati keeps its servers and obtain the data that our legal representative had not given them – not with reticence, but because that information is clearly unavailable.

In November 2010 the Norwegian postal police performed their duty towards their Italian colleagues: they turned up at our provider's webfarm and asked to copy all the disks in the server, whose contents are mostly encrypted.

About two hours after the seizure, we re-activated the services in different servers. After approximately 24 hours, our whole infrastructure was running exactly as before. In this case the R* Plan worked nicely as an anti-censorship system.

Some considerations

We think that what happened can be read at several levels, reflecting different facets of the Italian society.

First of all, the relationships between Neo-Fascism and institutions. Recently the process related to the Piazza della Loggia bombing ended with a series of acquittals. In two different phases of the Italian history, Neo-Fascism and some state organizations were closely connected. Historically, several elements link the Piazza della Loggia bombing with neo-fascist groups, and in this case there have been clear cover-ups, attempts to pigeon-hole the case, and silences which have obscured many details until today. Thirty years after that attack, it is impossible to obtain some kind of truth about what happened. The protection mechanism that was started in the 70s worked perfectly well.

This kind of attitude is endemic, and can be found in more recent incidents that may be minor but are nonetheless painful.

The men who confessed to have killed the antifascist activist Dax have been sentenced to ridiculous punishments, if compared for instance to the four-year imprisonment sentence given to four Milanese anti-fascists who had “robbed” a nazi-skin by taking his jacket.

These days, when all over Italy the police is complaining about reduced funds, we find it unexplainable that a private lawsuit filed at the Avezzano police office regarding minor events can unleash an international rogatory frenzy aimed at acquiring data that are inexistent and would be irrelevant to any investigation.

We can explain this only if we assume that “Casa Pound” has a certain influence in some sectors of the Italian police.

Since we were asked to witness and bound to answer, we have clearly declared that we did not have the requested information. The subsequent seizure means that they did not believe us.

We don't understand what legal motivation can justify a damage to 2,000 people's privacy just to obtain an evidence that the data regarding one unknown individual do not exist. This investigation regards a single mailbox, and what was requested in November 2010 was some logs dating back to late 2008, which we did not have even back then.

Some answers can be perhaps found in the text of the rogatory letter, and a passage from that brilliant English translation must be quoted:

“to obtain the file of log, and IP-access, for consultation, registration, change of password and updating relative to the mailbox ORSA CANAGLIE . NET (SHE-BEAR SCOUNDREL . NET) in the time span 2008-12-09 to 2009-12-09.”

The Public prosecutor’s office ordered the seizure, but did not realize that translating a user name and a mail domain is as ridiculous as it is useless. To be honest, we don’t think that this office is able to produce any technical assessments regarding an IT case.

To sum up: this action appears as a small political intimidatory retaliation against Autistici/Inventati, who have been considered reticent in denying a piece of information we have never had and never will have in the future.

But this small retaliation implies a major privacy problem for the 2,000 users who had a space in that server. Likewise, the facts that gave rise to this investigation have been seemingly overrated. Starting from an irrelevant political skirmish, overstated charges were used to send three rogatory letters abroad.

Along this line, any argument among neighbors could be turned into an international plot. This makes no sense, but in the end, nothing makes much sense in this whole story.

A Demoscene documentary

Thu, 25 Nov 2010

If you don’t know what is the **demoscene** then this is a good chance to have a complete retrospective: the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) has produced a documentary about the Finnish demoscene³³.

The biggest part of the demoscene has always been flourishing in northern Europe and especially in Scandinavia, where massive demoparty gatherings were held - nothing compared to our TIG97³⁴ or TIG98³⁵ in Italy, but hey at least we tried :D - so the fact this documentary is made in Finland now makes it extremely interesting.

The demoscene documentary episodes³⁶ are online with english subtitles, the first one is titled “Early 1990 era - Moving from cracking to demos” and says a lot about the good old days. . .

4th Amendment underwear

Fri, 26 Nov 2010

4TH AMENDMENT UNDERCLOTHES³⁷ provides a way to protest those intrusive TSA X-ray scanners without saying a word.

Metallic ink-printed undershirts and underwear. Kewl.

San Miguel penitentiary on fire

Fri, 10 Dec 2010

Yesterday a fire in the San Miguel penitentiary in Santiago de Chile killed over 80 inmates and severely wounded dozens. Among the dead, Bastián Arriagada, 22 years old, was in jail for 61 days for an infraction to the Intellectual Property Law.

Bastián had been detained for selling pirated CDs.

“No tenía trabajo y por eso se dedicó a vender CDs en la calle, lo hizo para no caer en la delincuencia y mire lo que le pasó. . . En este país no hay justicia para los pobres”, declaró

³³<http://demoscenedoc.com/>

³⁴<http://storico.olografix.org/ig97/>

³⁵<http://storico.olografix.org/tig98/>

³⁶<http://demoscenedoc.com/pages/the-episodes>

³⁷<http://cargocollective.com/4thamendment>



**METALLIC INK-PRINTED
4TH AMENDMENT T-SHIRT**

la tía del fallecido al diario La Nación³⁸. Otro familiar declaró a EMOL³⁹: “Bastián vendía discos pirata de amigos para mantener a su familia y poder ahorrar, porque quería retomar sus estudios de educación media, que había dejado hace unos años atrás. Bastián no era un criminal”.

El incendio de la cárcel de San Miguel dejó 83 muertos, entre ellos muchos que no estaban por delitos violentos.

ClubHACK Indian magazine

Tue, 21 Dec 2010

This year was born and grew very well, it is a new hacking magazine: CHMag⁴⁰ - and this time is made in India (and written in english)

Ladies & Gentleman, Hackers & Geeks, Nerds & Newbies.

In India we were waiting to see any 'hacking' magazine to happen and the wait was getting little longer. So finally ClubHack decided to come out with its own 1st Indian “Hacking” Magazine.

All issues free to download online.

³⁸<http://www.lanacion.cl/delitos-iban-desde-homicidio-hasta-venta-de-peliculas-piratas/noticias/2010-12-09/020606.html>

³⁹<http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/detalle/detallenoticias.asp?idnoticia=451700>

⁴⁰<http://chmag.in/>

After a quick look i can tell this mag goes for some real stuff, it definitely interesting for a worldwide audience and finally unleashes all the potential of the vast and highly skilled hacker communities growing in Asia since years. Just check out their recent article on reverse engineering Android apps⁴¹...

Namaste'!

(and thanks to naif for the pointer on the hackmeeting ml)

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⁴¹<http://chmag.in/article/dec2010/android-reverse-engineering-kick-start>