



WHERE IS THE DATABODY?

"OUR PRODUCT IS INFORMATION ...
 INFORMATION THAT CHARGES AIRLINE TICKETS, HOTEL ROOMS, DINING-OUT, THE NEWEST FASHIONS ...
 INFORMATION THAT GROWS MONEY FUNDS BUYS AND SELLS EQUITIES ...
 INFORMATION THAT PAYS LIFE INSURANCE ANNUITIES ...
 INFORMATION THAT SCHEDULES ENTERTAINMENT ON CABLE TELEVISION AND ELECTRONICALLY GUARDS HOUSES ...
 INFORMATION THAT CHANGES KRONERS INTO GUILDERS AND FIGURES TAX RATES IN BERMUDA ..."
 (American Express advertisement, 1982)

Information is everything. In the information society, this has become the faith which unites the most diverse social groups. Business companies and trade unions, universities and governments, military officers and peace campaigners, stock brokers and bus drivers: there are few who would not adopt modern society's latest creed.

"INFORMATION IS EVERYTHING!"

(Imation, ChainMail, ProInfo, The National List, Harte Hanks Direct Marketing Associates, IQ Data Systems, American Data Systems, Eurosoft Corporation, Unisys, Canadian Bear Hunting Network, Performance Management Solutions Ltd., American Data Corporation, Fast Company Inc., Telephone Information™, Deerhunting Net, Albuquerque Media Monitoring, Rumble Strip Graphics, Pointcast Inc., Meindlsoft.com, National Council on Women's Health, Inc., Babcock Ltd., Thoroughbred Systems, Inc., European Fly Fishing Ring, Cat Soft, Donth Technology Group, All Brokers, Inc., Wheat Publishing Group, Plexus IT Ltd. etc. etc.)

(28 out of 365 search results for "information is everything" at Alltheweb.com, 3 April 2000)

SALVATION THROUGH INFORMATION. In the databody economy, ancient strategic wisdom about information has taken on a new significance. It forms the core of a new global doctrine of salvation. It has become the Lord's Prayer of the IT priests. It has become the war cry of the data hunters and data defenders alike. Information is knowledge packed into data, knowledge bought and sold on the marketplace.

DATA WAREHOUSES. The fuel pipes of the databody economy converge in the nerve centers of the information society, where data supplied is sorted, segmented and processed according to objective economic and bureaucratic criteria. The resulting collection of surplus value data is called a data warehouse.

DATA BUNKERS. Places where large amounts of data are concentrated are vulnerable to disruption. The potential damage which can be caused through data loss means that concentrations of data are housed in fortress-like structures.

Large data repositories are surrounded by physical and virtual walls and controlled gates which restrict access. Somewhat like the monolithic fortresses of the medieval age, the modern data bunkers represent a symbolic order and structurally enforce homogeneity.

WHICH DATA ARE STORED WHERE?

Data related to an individual's life is stored in thousands of different databases. The size, growth rate and performance of these databases depends on the degree to which a society has moved into databody economy.

Resisting the data bunkers. The ideal of the data empires is frictionless data collection and boundless data exploitation. Often enough, this dream is at odds with collective claims to political autonomy and personal sovereignty. In Germany, the government had to shelve ambitious census plans in the 1980s, and in other countries, too, official data collecting projects encountered civil society resistance.

Today, the virtualisation of the social in electronic data networks means that data capturing is hidden behind the masks of innocuous enjoyment or enlightened rational projects.

Accordingly, new resistant practices have emerged, ranging from frontal "Denial of Service (DoS)" attacks on super-computers to faking and ironic distortion.

