

# Cylex

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*In a series of landmark discrimination cases in the early 'aughts, the U.S. Congress argued that since slang is such a vital aspect of cyberspace life, anyone who couldn't master it is effectively excluded from large parts of the Net. Moreover, the speed with which Net slang evolves served to bar anyone who wasn't a Net regular. Hence, in 2003, Congress established Cylex as a resource to equalize access to the Net. It can be downloaded by anyone, at any time. In theory, it is kept up to date; however, the true lag time is considered to be between six and eight weeks.*

## A

### **Antilex**

(n) a variant on Cylex published by a shifting coalition of e-pubs who feel that Cylex is often both inaccurate (because slanted toward the government viewpoint) and out of date. [AL]

### **autolott**

(n) short for automated lottery, this is the standard form of lottery now run by most major companies, the federal government, and all state governments except Utah. Most digital transfers now automatically cause the destination/recipient to be encoded and dropped into a lottery pool, from which prize drawings are then made. This form of lottery, in which one does not have to actively play to win, is an outgrowth of the credit-card pools of the 1990s. Autolotts were devised in part as a corporate marketing method to get around the highly successful doorman programs. [AL]

## B

### **black bank**

(n) an underground institution for generating and distributing digital signatures outside the government-approved three-bank scheme. Black banks tend to be small and to go in and out of business quickly as they are usually unable to sustain the integrity of their security schemes and thus can lose all their business literally overnight. Although not technically illegal, they cater to an amorphous and shifting population of criminals and clans who for one reason or another don't trust the integrity of the national digital-signature scheme. The Russian, South African, Korean, and Caribbean mafias are all known to run their own black banks. [AL]

**bodyguard**

(n) general term covering localized software that searches out and destroys viruses, worms, trojan horses, scavengers, and other Net wildlife. The U.S. government has imposed severe restrictions on bodyguards to ensure that they don't run loose in the Net. (See also cannibal, hulk.) [AL]

**borden**

(n) any nondigital object that figures as evidence in a legal proceeding, especially under criminal law. Since most legal proceedings are now carried out entirely in cyberspace, lawyers have largely lost the ability to sway juries by showing them physical evidence of crimes. In cases where such evidence is important, prosecutors (rarely defense lawyers) often pursue strategies to get the case transferred from cyberspace to real-space courtrooms. Hence (v) to borden means to obtain or try to obtain such a change of venue. The word derives indirectly from the bloodstained ax that played such a prominent role in the conviction of Lizzie Borden for the murder of her parents. Related phrase borden of proof. [AL]

**C****cannibal**

(n) a special form of bodyguard that will wipe out everything on its home computer Net, including itself, once activated. Popular among criminals for destroying digital evidence beyond the possibility of recovery, they can be set to react to time delays, improper logons, remotes, and other tripwires. There are a number of different types of cannibal, only a few of which are dangerous to humans. Those incorporating explosives are known as challengers (in reference to an early space shuttle that blew up, taking out seven astronauts in the process), while those causing electrocution of the person trying to access the data are known as headhunters. [AL]

**cat-tag**

(n) a digital signature for corporations and other businesses; legally required for all business e-mail and data transfers over the Net. The word is a short form of "catalog tag" and also probably a back-formation from dogtag. Cat-tags came into use after the first flood of digital junk mail; the ensuing consumer protests brought about the adoption of cat-tags that could be screened by doorman programs. The government used the controversy to institute compulsory registration of digital signatures in so-called name banks. Cat-tags are handled by one of the three major signature banks, the First National Name Bank (a subsidiary of Citicorp). [AL]

**clan**

(n) a type of on-line voluntary organization formed among private individuals to exchange information and pursue group activities in a limited forum. The word is an acronym whose expansion is disputed; according to most authorities it stands for compound local area Network, but popular etymology usually gives it as short for collaborative Net. Clans sprang up in the wake of the Clinton administration's disastrous

health care reform and the information deluge released in cyberspace by the gradual dismantling of the copyright laws. In order to reassert control over the quality of information, advice, and services given and received, people spontaneously started forming small, tightly knit groups on the Net, usually in the form of lockout forums. Typically, a clan is started by a few close friends, and over time they gradually lock in new members of complementary professions. For example, a group that had no doctor member would recruit someone compatible from the on-line and-or off-line community. However, there are also highly specialized clans, such as the craft clans and the Tertians. Some clans have membership fees, but most work primarily on a barter system, such that members work a certain numbers of hours a year for each other. It is considered a mark of status to be recruited by a prestigious clan. [AL]

### **Cylex**

(n) the on-line lexicon of slang continuously published and updated by the U.S. government in accordance with a 2003 mandate of Congress. [AL]

## **D**

### **digsig**

(n) semi-official slang for digital signature; the U.S. government in particular avoids the use of the otherwise universal dogtag. [AL]

### **dogtag**

(n) slang for digital signature generally, derived from the military slang for tags recording one's identification number. Usually used to refer to digital signatures of individuals, while cat-tag is reserved for business-related digital signatures. Dogtags are handled by two of the three major signature banks, the Federal Name Repository (under the Federal Reserve Bank) and 21st Century Names (a subsidiary of Time-Warner). [AL]

### **doorman**

(n) a computer program used to screen incoming data, especially e-mail and junk mail, for unwanted items. Doormen became popular after the federal government began to deliver subpoenas electronically and disputes arose over the point at which an e-subpoena could be said to have been accepted. Any item that passes a doorman is now considered to have been received by the gateway computer and hence also by its registered owner. Most doormen also incorporate bodyguards. [AL]

### **doormat**

(n) an ineffective doorman. [AL]

### **dwarfing**

(n) a common method for including source information in digital files by reducing the information packet greatly in size and embedding it in some other part of the data. As dwarfing often involves actual data compression as well, it is one of the more difficult forms of hidden sourcing to recover. [AL]

## **E**

### **e-cash**

(n) digital money. Coins and bills are ordinarily used only for very small purchases and also on the black market. [AL]

## **F**

### **Federal Name Repository**

(n) federal name bank for generating and storing the digital signatures (encryption keys) that replaced social security numbers as of 2009. The government now generates a pair of keys for every child as soon as its birth is registered; the public key serves the same functions as the old social-security number and in addition is used to encode certain data throughout an individual's life that will be accessible to that person only. The child's private key is kept under wraps at the FNR until his or her 18th birthday, at which point it is turned over to that individual alone. [AL]

### **fortune hunt**

(n, v) a search for hidden information in data files (such as e-catalogs, e-zines, and e-books) that entitles the finder to a prize. These are in vogue among puzzle enthusiasts generally but nowhere near as popular or lucrative as the autolotts. [AL]

## **G**

### **genealogy**

(n) a new specialty within the field of art history and criticism, genealogy consists of interpreting artistic trends and developments by tracing the ramifications of source lists through different generations of image transfer, duplication, alteration, etc. Genealogists tend to be looked down on by traditional art historians because most of their data are inherently unreliable. [AL]

### **Generics**

(n) an e-zine published by the Municipal Dump and featuring the theory and practice of generic art. In the 1990s, the activities of the Museum of Forgery and others brought about a shift in focus from brand-name art (e.g., Leonardo's Mona Lisa) to generic categories of art (e.g., "mona-lisas"; that is, works related to the Mona Lisa). Each issue of Generics normally has a person, style, period, or individual work as its theme, and generic works created by artists on that theme are published. Making appropriate attributions (rather than listing works under the names of their actual creators) is a central activity of Generics. As a rule, issues are updated annually; the two most popular issues, on baldessarisi and posthumous duchamps, run over 1000 pages of hardcopy apiece. [AL]

## H

### **hibachi**

(n) a photograph known or presumed to have been altered; much in use by the legal profession. The term came into use in the late 1990s, often sarcastically, when a series of court cases hinging on disputed photographic evidence led to severe restrictions on the use of photographs (and later videos) as evidence. The phrase traces back to a remark by a Vietnam War general, William Westmoreland, who dismissed a famous photograph of napalmed Vietnamese children running down a road as a "hibachi accident." [AL]

### **homebase**

(n) the original source of data or other information, usually presumed to be a guarantee that it is unaltered and/or of high quality. Early concerns about the need to protect against data piracy through more stringent copyright laws vanished when it became clear that people were willing to pay for homebase material in order to protect themselves against corrupt or infected files. (It was actually possible to market homebase material for some time before the advent of dogtags and e-cash made it really practical to do so.) [AL]

### **hulk**

(n) also Hulk. An ineffective bodyguard. The term comes from the name of Hulk Hogan, a one-time professional wrestler; a hulk only looks like it's doing its job. [AL]

### **hypgnostic**

(n) variant spelling of hypnostic. [AL]

### **hypnostic**

(n) a computer program that can induce varying levels of hypnosis or trance states in the user under controlled conditions. Usually in the form of rapidly metamorphosing, often geometric images combined with a sound track, hypnostics are an outgrowth of research into the long-term neurological effects of screen-saver programs. Although they have become popular adjuncts to meditation, therapy, and recreational drug use, there is continuing controversy over parallel military research that has led to the development of programs that can induced severe disorientation, hallucination, phobia, catatonia, schizophrenia, and other forms of mental breakdown. Hypnostics are also implicated in the premature development of cataracts, and most regular hypnostics users suffer from semi-permanent facial tics in the region of the eyes. [AL]

## K

### **kunstmorph**

(n, v) an activity in which one chooses two artworks and creates a metamorphic sequence between them. Most popular as a digital process, it is also a common off-line activity among the craft clans. [AL]

## L

### **lockin**

(n, a) a part of cyberspace to which one has a password. Similarly, to lock in (v) means to give someone a cyberpass. [AL]

### **lockout**

(n) any part of cyberspace to which one does not have the password. Similarly, to lock out (v). [AL]

## M

### **MD Pound**

(n) a recycling center run by the Municipal Dump in most major cities to which anyone can bring artworks for destruction, exchange, or recycling. MD Pounds work on an exchange principle; for every pound of materials one donates, one is entitled to take away an equivalent poundage. They grew out of the environmental aesthetic, which recognized that artists who created much more than they destroyed were guilty of a form of littering. The MD Pound logo features the mustaches of Salvador Dali, a notably prolific 20th century surrealist. [AL]

### **Municipal Dump**

(n) an institution formed by the Macarthur Foundation in 2117 to act as a clearinghouse for nonobject artists. The name comes from the common slang used to denote museums generally and New York's Metropolitan Museum in particular ("municipal dump" replaced the formerly popular "mausoleum"). The MD's main functions include maintaining a digital database of artworks, publishing Generics, and distributing diy forgeries. The MD also maintains MD Pounds in major cities. The MD logo features the mustache-and-goatee from Marcel Duchamp's famous L.H.O.O.Q. One occasionally sees MD referred to as M2D2 because of a prevailing belief that the institution's "secret" name is Marcel Duchamp's Municipal Dump. [AL]

## N

### **name bank**

(n) 1. a repository for generating, distributing, and storing public and private keys for data encryption 2. a registry for digital signatures. As money became fully electronic at the turn of the century, banks took over the business of security for their customers' digital signatures. Eventually, due in part to the proliferation of competing public-key encryption schemes, Congress moved to restrict name banks to three one for government transactions, one for business transactions, and one for personal transactions. Most people have keys in at least two of the three banks. (See also Federal Name Repository.) [AL]

## P

### **picon**

(n) short for personal icon, a picon is a graphical or other data-generated stand-in for an individual, much used in place of names, signatures, and/or photos on vidphones, Nets, and elsewhere. Picons can be protected under trademark law only if they are registered in the National Picon Database, in order to avoid multiple instances of the same picon. However, they are not accepted by the government or for legal purposes in lieu of dogtags. (The corporate equivalent of a picon is a logo.) [AL]

### **p&t**

(a) also pnt. short for point & touch, p&t refers to things that are tangible or real-world as opposed to intangible (hyperspatial, cyberspatial, mental). Generally used as a shorthand for object-oriented; e.g., a p&t publisher as opposed to an e-pub. Often used to imply that something is old-fashioned, as in his artwork is real p&t stuff. [AL]

## S

### **source**

(v) to source means to give credit to one's sources of materials, especially those being substantially altered. Sourcing became a widespread norm even before the death of copyright meant that one could source one's materials without fear of being sued for copyright infringement. Some people advocate making sourcing a legal requirement, but because that would obviously be unenforceable and because source data are often unverifiable, this movement has never really gotten off the ground. Accurate sourcing is a point of pride for most artists, and since source lists (or genealogies) can become quite long and complex, a number of ingenious ways of either hiding them or displaying them have been developed. (See genealogy, transparency.) [AL]

### **source hunt**

(n, v) an attempt to recover hidden source information in a data file. Source hunting became popular among puzzle enthusiasts and was a precursor of the now more generally popular fortune hunt. Many filemakers, especially artists, offer prizes to source hunters to spur general interest in their work. [AL]

## T

### **Tertian**

(n, a) originally Orbis Tertian. Tertians are members of Orbis Tertius, an unusual clan linked by the common project of realizing a special edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica mentioned in Jorge Luis Borges's short story "Tlšn, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." In Borges's story, a certain edition of the Britannica contains extra entries that refer to another world, intriguing details of which are given in the story. Orbis Tertius was

founded by a group of writers specifically to alter the Britannica in conformity with Borges's story, and the Tertians subsequently continued to extend the fiction at great length. It was a court case arising out of the activities of the Tertians that led to the final extinction of copyright law when the Britannica's publishers lost their attempt to bar the Tertians from altering the encyclopedia without permission. Homepage editions of the Tertian Encyclopedia are consistent bestsellers (subscribers are entitled to get it updated on request). [AL]

**tilde (~)**

printer's mark, adopted for use to signify that material is free of all restrictions on alteration, copying, publication, etc., including the normal convention of sourcing. [AL]

**transparency**

(n) a common form for source information to be included in digital files, especially object-oriented image files. Transparencies are a layer of information included in a file and assigned an object color of transparent (or background, paper, etc.). To recover them, one must know how to search for invisible objects in such files, a procedure that varies from application to application. (See also dwarfing, source hunt.) [AL]