

NO CARRIER
AND OTHER STORIES
FROM PHILIPPINE
BBS CULT
URE



IF we think of culture as prerequisite for human creativity, then a people's cultural milieu influences attitudes towards software as medium for creativity. If we think of the creative impulse as catalyst for culture, then attitudes towards software as medium for creativity define changes in society. An intricate relationship exists between creativity and the human condition. And because human creativity reflects and shapes the human condition, the making of and contemplation upon software is part of the cultural, political, social and economic spheres within which the practices thrive. This is what may be known today as software culture.

Software are step-by-step instructions that tell a computer to perform a task. Software has also been defined as information goods with a unique behavior. This behavior is that information goods is shared and distributed easily, thus, commercial information producers prohibit the free exchange of information.¹ However, most people are not really confronted with “software” — they are presented with the effects of software and it is on this level that “information technology” generally operates.² If this is true, then it is important to investigate the social dimensions of software, not only as information goods but also as landscape for reconceptualizations of the transformation of the material foundations of human life.

Software cultures are cultures generated by programmers, designers and software users. As such, programmers, designers and software users interact with the social dimensions of software. Here, the social dimensions of software not only reflects but also is an exten-

sion of the social structure of a cultural group within which information is shared. A subservient society misunderstands and misuses the social dimensions of software. A subservient information society produces a productive yet docile information economy—subservience is the collective acquiescence of programmers, designers and software users to a corrupt consumerist information society. This is the context within which I would like to present and analyze a small-networked culture of electronic bulletin board systems, or BBSs, in the Philippines.

An electronic bulletin board system (BBS) is a centralized information source and message switching system; as small electronic message passing systems focused on shared interests, BBSs are self-contained online communities. Being online means being connected to another computer through a modem or network. Access to BBSs is generally of three types: dial-up, Telnet and Web.

BBS world history may be traced back to the early history of telegraphy and electronic data processing, from Morse to Baudot, to Bell and Hollerith, to the first commercially available modem in 1962 (AT&T's Bell 103) and the first BBS in 1978 ("Computerized BBS" or CBBS).³

In the Philippines, early initiatives in electronic data processing and communications include individual explorations or work at universities not directly related to commercial products. Roberto Verzola started working with computers in 1979 as a student at the University of the Philippines. Enrolled in the College of Engineering, Verzola began a student project to design and assemble a microcomputer with a Z80 microprocessor, 16-kilobyte memory, a converted black and white TV for display and a converted tape recorder for storage. In 1984, he improved the design and assembled five prototypes with 20 programs in BASIC to demonstrate the capabilities of the machines, perhaps the first locally designed microcomputer. In 1985, Verzola decided to focus on software, and consequently, his look into social and historical readings of information and communications technology (ICT) beginning, among others, with the local BBS.⁴

As a social scientist and activist Verzola's involvement in Philippine BBSs was among the first in the country and perhaps the first with a socialist orientation. From 1985-1986 he started exploring online communications and concepts of democratization and technologies with the Ibon Foundation and a computer center for NGOs called "People's Access." Verzola also ran a BBS called "Andromeda" and wrote his own BBS program "Andro" using the dBase compiler Clipper S'87 with a third party communications library written in C for accepting dial-up users.⁵ "Andro" was also used to set up a public access BBS for the Philippine Senate and the House of Representatives.

In the mid-80's, young people working at a local computer company called MSI have also began writing their own BBS software in order to demonstrate the features of modems that they were building from scratch. Semi-commercial public access BBSs also started cropping up, as well as free access BBSs run as hobbies by computer enthusiasts from their homes.

In 1986, the first Philippine Fido BBS, "Star BBS," was opened to the public. A few more BBSs maintained a closed loop Fidonet mail system, and a small group of sysops and callers started getting together in gatherings called EB's (or "eyeball"). These were the very first online communities in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, out in Olongapo City, an American civilian by the name of Bill English working in the US Subic Naval Base set up "Billboard BBS." Though not directly supported, the US military allowed English free direct access to the US and a toll-free number that Manila BBSs and callers could use to access his BBS. Through "Billboard BBS"'s direct links to the US, English was able to get the latest sharewares for the other BBSs to download and distribute. Then in 1998, the closed loop Fidonet mail system of some ten Manila-based BBSs had a major break via a hookup established with "Space Com," a BBS located in the US Naval base in Atsugi, Japan.⁶

Through "Billboard BBS"'s link with the Japanese Fido network, the Philippine Fidonet BBSs were able to send and receive e-mail and files with other countries. "Billboard BBS" would poll daily at 12 noon to "Space Com" in Japan, and "TWiLiGHT ZoNe!" BBS, run

by Carlos Legaspi in Manila, would poll “Billboard BBS” daily in the evening. For two years, the Philippines’ access to international e-mail was through the US Naval base in Subic and in Atsugi under Region 63 of the Japanese Fido network. According to Bill English, this set-up, which was established in 1988, was the true start of e-mail directly to the Philippines.

In 1991, the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo shut down power in the Naval base, and “Billboard BBS” was down for 33 days. As soon as power was restored, “Billboard BBS” went back online and immediately polled “Space Com” in Japan for all the mail that had stacked up. That same year, the rejection of the new US Bases treaty by the Philippine Senate meant the closure of the Subic Naval Base and permanent closure of “Billboard BBS” as Fidonet gateway in the Philippines.⁷

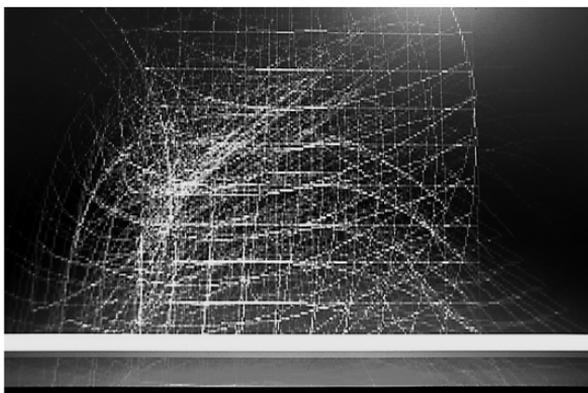
In July 1992, the last international mail packet was received by “Billboard BBS.” By then, a new gateway had been established. Carlos Legaspi’s contact with Honlin Lue of “Modem Way BBS” in Taiwan paved the way for reorganizing the Philippines from Region 63 in Japan to its own Region 64 in the Fidonet international nodelist. “TWiLiGHT ZoNe !” became the official Region 64 Philippine Fidonet gateway, and Carlos Legaspi its Regional Coordinator (RC).⁸

As “Billboard BBS” relocated to Japan, Bill English continued to exchange messages and files with Carlos Legaspi’s “TWiLiGHT ZoNe !” through floppy disks sent by post. Meanwhile, “TWiLiGHT ZoNe !”’s netmail was maintained through “The Warzone BBS” run by David Schepper in the US. Schepper and Legaspi shared the direct dial-up charges from the US. Without “Billboard BBS” in Subic, the Philippine Fidonet to Internet gateway was maintained through this set-up of people who believed it was still worthwhile to spend money, time and effort into providing an online experience for the public. While access to BBSs remained free, mechanisms to charge for international netmail were being established. Strictly speaking, the first Internet service providers (ISPs) were the BBSs offering local and international email through the international Fido network.

By 1991, other Internet gateways were established through access to US-based services like CompuServe via a dial-up connection through X.25 networks or UUCP provided by a few local telecoms companies. However, the limitations of dial-up connections and anticipated demand for Web and Internet email would later prompt a move to dedicated leased line for full Internet access. Such a move, which eventually opened the Internet and the World Wide Web to the public, was initiated and supported by the National Computer Center (prodded by the director of the US National Science Foundation) and the Department of Science and Technology. In 1993, PHNet was created to develop and implement the Philippine Internet gateway, from dial-up to dedicated leased lines.

In 1994, the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Ateneo de Manila University, De la Salle University and the University of San Carlos in Cebu City became part of the first network to connect to the Internet via a CISCO 7000 router imported by Willy Gan of ComNet, a local networking equipment vendor. The router was installed at the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) office in Makati City. It was PLDT that provided the 64kbps leased line connection to Sprint in the US. The first leased line connection to the Internet was launched at the first International Conference on Electronic Mail at the University of San Carlos. Later that same year, ComNet launched Mosaic Communications, Inc., the country's first commercial Internet service provider (ISP) to provide TCP/IP connectivity.

In March 1995, the Philippine Congress passed Republic Act 7925, the Omnibus Telecommunications Act of the Philippines, classifying Internet service providers as value-added services of existing telecommunications companies. This allowed existing network facilities to operate as ISPs without the need for a Congressional franchise. As the number of ISPs rose, so did the number of Internet users. In 1999, there were half a million Internet users in the Philippines, nearly 3 million in 2001, and is expected to grow to 12.5 million in 2005. Even as the country acquired its first leased line connection to the Internet in 1994, the BBS community still continued to grow. In 1994, there were over 50 BBSs in the country. In 1997, there were



Grid BY JOSEF BOYDON, SOFTWARE ART WRITTEN IN C. 1996



Pop the Martians BY JOSEF BOYDON, SOFTWARE ART
WRITTEN IN C. 2000

over 26 BBS networks and over 150 BBSs in Metro Manila alone, some of them multi-node BBSs. By 1999, as more sysops and users left BBSing for cheaper Internet and Web access, the number of BBSs dropped to about 50, some of them accessible through Telnet. The number of BBS networks, however, rose to 60, signaling a struggle to keep the BBS community alive. In the year 2001, there were about 12 BBSs and two Telnet BBSs. By January 2004, only five BBSs and three BBS networks remain.

It was in mid-1997 that I decided to become a sysop. At first, I managed to set up the computer so that it ran as host for data calls and answering machine for voice calls. In November that year, with help from “Livewire!” BBS sysop Eddie Salonga, I decided to run a BBS using Wildcat 4.12. “Digiteer” was a single line BBS that ran on a 486SX laptop computer.

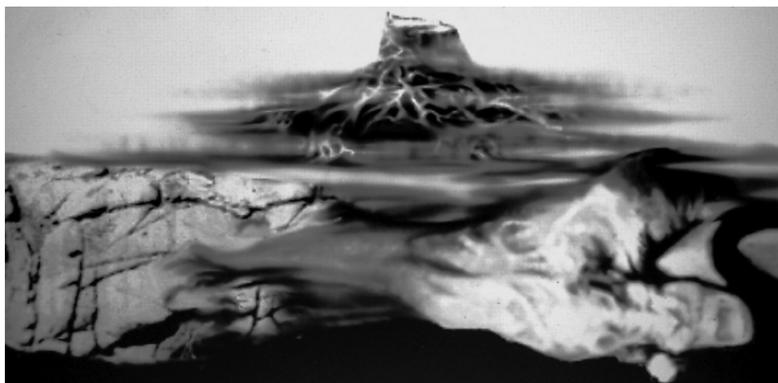
For three years, “Digiteer” went online everyday from 10 o’clock in the evening till 8 o’clock in the morning. I wanted “Digiteer” to focus on “digital art and hypermedia” and had message and files areas dedicated to the subjects. However, what made “Digiteer” quite popular was the door game. Nevertheless, in the short period that it was online, I suppose “Digiteer” did succeed in making the art and computer link more visible as a few of “Digiteer” users started collaborating on digital images by exchanging files online and producing software that made peculiar pictures. We also made images and absurd stories based on the door game “Legend of the Red Dragon,” and used our offline mail readers (OMRs) to share and view ANSI art. Certainly we cracked and played with our OMRs to turn BBS messages into ridiculous taglines and cut-up poetries. A few people also began developing their own door games.

Young student programmer Josef Boydon was perhaps the most enthusiastic BBS caller with regards to exploring spaces between aesthetics and programming. His early experiments included a series of software written in C called “ArtQuery.” Later, he sought to share his passion for creative programming through a group he put together called the Version Zero Software Club and a BBS network dedicated to Japanese anime.

“Digiteer” went permanently down in mid-2000 after a hardware failure. In terms of physical resources, it was just impossible to run the BBS again. However, I also see this “hardware failure” as a lack of communalism, and in hindsight, a fatal abandonment and loss of appreciation of the huge amount of social and emotional energy that have developed out of maintaining a vibrant BBS community.

According to Filipino digital artist and social realist Al Manrique, the “BBS is an information cooperative, a link between islands of information... The BBS is also a secret or select society or more like feudal fiefdoms. It can be an organizational tool but never as a societal tool. Society would simply take on a portion of its technology. There are so many need factors: computer, telephone, software, sysops.”⁹ However, Manrique, who was also involved in the early years of “People’s Access”, admits that perhaps there is a “need to reinvent the BBS into something socially relevant.”¹⁰

In retrospect, the BBS, being mostly about access rather than community, was just waiting to burst out into the mother of all networks that is the Internet. So when the BBS climaxed into the international Fido network, it was just getting ready to implode. In the Philippines, the BBS signaled its own demise as a self-contained electronic community when the Freedom Network (FreeNet)



Untitled digital image by AL MANRIQUE. 1991. MANRIQUE'S EARLY DIGITAL WORKS, WHICH OFTEN HAD A SOCIO-POLITICAL THEME, WERE DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE BBS NETWORKS.

became the first local BBS network to connect to the Internet through PHNet at the University of the Philippines.

Beginning in 1992, access to Internet email was becoming the primary motivation for using a BBS, and it had to be fast reliable access.

A few BBSs that managed direct Internet connection served as a kind of Internet gateway. But because direct Internet access was still expensive in the early to mid-90's, most people depended on the BBS. For a small subscription fee, BBSs provided Internet email service—no web access, with mails polled about once every few hours, and file attachments were often not allowed. It was absolutely no-frills Internet email but it was good enough. Later, the deregulation of the telecoms industry and the entry of foreign players in the field brought more ISPs into the country, boosting competition and lowering Internet access rates. It became easier to get all the other frills that full Internet access promised, and the BBS continued to lose its appeal.

There were also other reasons why some BBSs turned into Internet email servers and why they eventually closed down. Verzola's "Andromeda" BBS started providing Internet email services as early as 1992. Called the "Email Center" (EMC), the BBS made email available to NGOs and other progressive groups and individuals. But in 2000, Verzola decided to stop running the EMC, when UUCP was phased out and, according to Verzola, the pressure to provide full Internet access meant becoming a commercial ISP.

Computers were also becoming cheaper and more of the machines made it into the homes of the petit bourgeoisie and working class families. The computer became an idiot box, running Microsoft Windows, with a built-in Winmodem and a special ISP promo of several free hours of Internet access through a user-friendly graphical interface that made the connection to the world "just a click away." The uncritical use of computer technology soon became a major activity for many as cyber cafes proliferated not only in every major city but also in small rural communities across the country. Computer becomes appliance, programming becomes compliance, software and language become commodity, software culture degenerates into TV culture.

Veiled by the notion of progress and prettified by the tradition of modern entertainment, many of the old BBSers who have “been there, done that” accepted the loss of the monochrome, ANSI, all-text, terminal world of the BBS. Most ex-BBS sysops and users would admit that the BBS had no other way to go, and the most dominant reason was that faster and cheaper Internet access made BBSs unnecessary. A few sysops who were able to afford it, made their dial-up BBSs accessible via telnet. In other words, the fundamental differences and relationships between homebrew and military social software became conveniently confused into the commercialized notion of access, not so much because of the social dimensions of information, but because people never really understood the extensions and implications of such social dimensions. In the particular case of BBSs, people never really understood the contextual technological appropriateness of and the empowerment inherent within the BBS as social software. It has been said that we are manipulated to the extent that we are unaware of the nature of electronic forms.

In 1996, the small BBS community was among the first to oppose a controversial scheme to meter local phone calls by the country’s giant telephone company, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT). People from the BBS community attended the public hearings at the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC). However, debates on the metering plan were low and in 1998, the NTC granted the PLDT a provisional authority to implement phone metering. When concerns against metering were brought to the Philippine Senate, the issue generated greater public awareness. In 1999, the Senate committee on public services conducted a series of hearings on the scheme, eventually calling for a deferment of the provisional authority granted by the NTC.

It might be interesting to note that PLDT sought to impose phone metering in a bid to speed up their cable Internet service, not because they were losing revenue as they claimed but failed to prove before the Senate committee. In the service of the petit bourgeoisie, the working class would have had to bear the brunt of high technol-

ogy. The consumer may have won this time, but the level of debates on the PLDT issue indicates a simple case of individual interest affecting individual access to telecommunications, not of the dynamics of class and exploitation in the network society.

In my personal experience as BBS sysop and user, BBS culture as self-contained, self-determined and self-reliant culture offers the empowerment not found in the increasingly commercialized entertainment space that is the Internet. The BBS would've been the most powerful, open and important playground by which we, as a country with a semi-feudal economy, explored and understood the socio-economic matrix of what has become known as ICT. Individual isolated users can make up the mother of all networks, the Internet, but it takes conscious collective effort to maintain a BBS within a small community. A strong, self-determined and intelligent network community has a better chance of engaging with the giant monopolistic global network of the Internet, the cyberlords and their local counterparts. That is what "network-readiness" should be about — and not foreign loans, US "aid", profit remittances for foreign investors or giving in to US IPR demands in the race to establish the ICT infrastructure.

There are geopolitical and ecological approaches to the ICT issue, an issue which is also a globalization problem. The post-materialist social movement of Roberto Verzola (who is also secretary general of the Philippine Greens) advocates the combined principles of ecology, social justice and self-determination in a way that avoids the excesses of both capitalism and socialism.¹¹ Others advocate ICTs in poverty alleviation alongside broad-based development to encourage ICT investments that remove barriers to access, conduct education and promote pro-poor local content. Driven by liberalization, privatization and competition, and the euphoria of being pioneers of ICT, pro-poor ICT advocates catering to NGOs and progressive groups opened up sectors in a country desperately trying to catch up with other fast growing IT Asian powers to monopolistic commercial exploitation. Ignorance justifies ICT intervention by bridging the "Digital Divide." Bi-polarities such as the

“Information-rich and Information-poor” compel the ignorant into moral commitments with G7/G8 nations declarations of ICT as “the vital engine of growth for the world economy.”¹²

As an Asian artist, I advocate a triad of intellectualism, culturalism and activism as a conscious effort against manipulation through divisionism. Such a triad approach derives from the tripartite structure of ancient Philippine society, a society that was not based on a competitive economy and that possessed no “art” but only ritual. In this triad, there are three primary roles: the Datu, the Blacksmith and the Babaylan. The Datu is responsible for political affairs, the military functions and the economic health of society (commerce and agriculture). The Blacksmith, who works with metal and silver, is a specialist at making things—for domestic, agriculture, military purposes; the Blacksmith is the technology person. The Babaylan is considered the most significant in this trinity, an expert on all things pertaining to culture, religion, medicine and all sorts of theoretical and practical knowledge on natural and spiritual phenomena; he or she is a kind of proto-scientist with skills for mediating between god/s and humans. Somehow, as things “progressed”, through colonization and imperialism, the Datu and Blacksmith retained their positions, and the Babaylan was bombed and educated into oblivion. The nature of the ritual as a rite of the Babaylan was destroyed. It became “art.” Spirit degenerated into intellect. Ritual degenerated into “art.”

Composed of clusters of interconnected riverine, coastal and near-coastal communities, ancient Philippine network society maintained the triumvirate of communalism, sovereignty and autonomy under the combined expertise of the Datu, Blacksmith and Babaylan. This was a rank society totally different from western society’s classic slave class. Thus, as western colonialism arrested the Asiatic development of Philippine society, clusters of community drastically transformed from social into political units, and communal relationships corrupted into relations of exploitation. As detritus of capitalist intrusion, colonial Philippine society evolved via struggle and debate into a heightened awareness of the people’s exploita-

tion. This ancient heritage as precursor of geopolitics would have been a powerful means of contemplating upon the binary deceptions of the competitive economy and the recovery of the triad of communalism, sovereignty and autonomy in a country corrupted by foreign imperialism and internal feudalism.

The triad of communalism, sovereignty, and autonomy are best explored and expressed in the physical and non-physical layers of BBSs. The strength and fragility of these systems are due to the dynamic balance in this triad. Historically, the loss of the Babaylan in the tripartite due to western colonialism and capitalist incursion which left society with the binary of the Datu and the Blacksmith, symbolically depicts the degeneration of the BBS into the Internet, the confusion of the BBS with ISPs, and the incapacity to deal with the brutal transformation of the material basis of human life in the network society. The loss of autonomy is masked by the hype of communalism and sovereignty in the network society; without autonomy, communalism and sovereignty are illusory.

Communalism is defined as possession and belonging; sovereignty is the competent practice of supreme and independent political authority; and autonomy ensures self-government and self-determination.

Apart from the usual technical requisites, setting up a free access BBS means communal ownership of private property. The position of the sysop as administrator is limited by the collective effort of people in the BBS, in much the same way as the Datu of ancient society owes his or her position to tradition. Maintaining a free access BBS in the age of the Internet means a reconceptualization of small community network sovereignty in relation to globalization. A BBS will also succeed in its own continuous reconceptualization for as long as its own autonomy is formal and real.

In this triad, the governing of the means of production and exchange should be in the hands of those who participate in the productive (and programming) process. There is no exploitative ruling or leisure class. Thus, production and property, not used in the exploitative sense or limited in the material sense, are a combination

of communal ownership and private possession, perhaps as a form of post-communalism where the relations of dependence operate within a decentralized system of exchange and production. In principle and in practice, this triad undermines current so-called best practices for telecommunications reform, which include liberalization, privatization and competition.

These best practices, pushed by making deceptive links between ICT and poverty, is a blind and fatal leapfrogging of semi-feudal economies into the information economy. We know the economic and political consequences of the uncritical acceptance of ICT reforms masquerading as national economic development, but the underlying socio-cultural crisis in the use of technologies is often invisible. In all the earliest “Hitchhiker’s Guides to the Internet”, the obsession is always *how* to connect to the world’s largest network; there is never a meditation on the question of *why*. In this so-called post-modern world, the user manual is the bible of faith and ignorance. Hence, in the so-called indisputable link between ICT and poverty where people in a country were considered poor because they had little or no access to ICTs, huge sectors of the economy became subject to the missionary zeal of ICT rollout often tied to so-called charities from monopolistic commercial software giants such as Microsoft. But because ICT consumption is not ICT communalism, the poor only become poorer in an ignorant leap of faith. The Philippines is a country where 40% of the population live below the poverty line, and where people send more SMS text messages daily (about 40 million messages) than the rest of the world combined.

In the BBS to ISP experience of social activist Verzola, the dynamic balance of ICT communalism was not sustained. Although the UUCP phase-out is one factor, clearly the presence of mounting competition in ICT services “liberalized” the field; many NGO’s, church and progressive groups today can run their own ISPs and there are ISPs willing to provide dial-in UUCP and TCP/IP. Areas without access to phone lines have connected to BBSs via packet radio. One BBS user connected through a 2-meter 144.010 MHz fre-

quency packet radio using a home-made modem connected to an Icom transceiver.¹³

Apart from a less than creative look into the physical infrastructure, the error lies in underestimating the social dimensions of information—the BBS is not merely an ISP or a service, it is social software. To go beyond the trappings of service and information exchange, the triad demands communalism, sovereignty and autonomy. The “service” deception is partly inspired by the dichotomy of the “information-rich” and the “information-poor.” To recognize the deception in the “digital divide” in a society indoctrinated by foreign imperialism and its local counterparts means a closer scrutiny into the emphasis on technological production and consumption rather than technological creativity.

Established in 1993 through grants from UNDP, CIDA and the Foundation for the Philippine Environment, the NGO Philippine Sustainable Development Network (PSDN) “conducted seminars and training courses for NGOs, people’s organizations, academia and even the Government, telling them what information technology was, what a modem was, what it could do for them, all through the Bulletin Board System.”¹⁴ Through its pioneering IT education efforts, the PSDN saw what may be deemed as mission accomplished: “since Filipinos are now willing to pay commercial servers for the technologies PSDN helped introduce.” The PSDN national coordinator had remarked, “I think the Philippines is in a kind of limbo right now, the only area that is progressing is IT. Why? IT enables you to learn about everything that’s going on—everything. Nobody can fool you any more. We are now evaluating the niche we can occupy in the IT-aware world that we helped to create in the Philippines.”¹⁵ Perhaps PSDN helped make IT the healthiest economic sector in the Philippines, because more Filipinos are now willing to spend as much on commercial IT services as they do on food, housing and water. Surely, nobody can fool a poor consumerist society.

If we never really understood the social nature of information, then the spectacle and the promise of access was all that we could see. If we never really saw the connection between ICTs and the reality of

poverty in the Philippines, then it is thus impossible to even imagine that such a benevolent ICT could exploit the poor. If we never really became culturally determined and economically independent, we therefore have no sovereignty to establish our own cultural and economic definition of technology. Access to information does not necessarily guarantee creativity, and creativity is a prerequisite of political, social, cultural and economic intelligence. Preachers of access to information merely offer ICT as escape from the reality of political, social, cultural and economic poverty; and the modes by which people have come to know and understand technology, this escape route is a most entertaining and numbing addiction.

Perhaps if we could reinvent the BBS—then there is still hope. The Philippine BBS pioneers relied on foreign (mostly US) “templates” with regards to the administration and conceptualization of the BBS. The pioneers were also mostly young people from the privileged and upper class who could afford to travel to the US and be influenced and inspired by cutting edge developments there that took the route from hobby to entertainment. How can the bourgeoisie take the cue from the US military origins of technology and access, when their social and economic rights and privileges were never endangered, and when their ideas of the BBS are lifted from a foreign BBS culture that considers the sysop as god and users a pain in the butt?¹⁶

It has been said that former US President Ronald Reagan and his advisors were instrumental to the Philippine crisis of 1986 and the subsequent removal of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos from power.¹⁷ Reagan sought to influence the outcome of the peaceful Philippine People Power Revolution in a bid to have the US take the lead in subduing the “Evil Empire” to firmly establish its own. Perhaps it is true that the People Power Revolution roused a global peaceful movement in Eastern Europe, and in the last decade, the region has seen a rise in BBS activity. Central and Eastern Europe have become known distribution sites for illicit software and computer virus production through BBSs, but more importantly they have also used BBSs for libertarian and other ideological interest groups.

If Eastern Europe succeeded in “indigenizing” a concept of ICT through the BBS playground then perhaps it will help them deal with global informational capitalism. If the Philippines is losing the fight against the thirdwave of technological plunder then perhaps the Philippine experience could become valuable again to Eastern Europe as she accepts the embrace of modern Europe. I believe that the small Philippine BBS culture reflects the true crisis of the Filipino people’s use and understanding of information, communication and technology.

I believe that such a small picture reflects the giant global picture of our vulnerability in the transformation of the material foundations of all our notions of power, identity and freedom.

If we can see these reflections then perhaps there is still hope, then perhaps the continuing story of the BBS can still be written and told

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