



## Editorial

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by Gordon Jenkins

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Several of our contributors have written quite controversial articles this edition. It must be the heat of summer! I will not point the finger which article or articles, as it would be most inappropriate on my part. The readers must be the final jury.

Well there is a hint at one of the contentious articles! - A slip Mr. Field - honest!

So I have entered into the spirit of this summer edition with a controversial editorial of my own. I do this safely because as everyone knows, few read the editorial anyway.

### **ARTICLE: THE INTERNET :FOR ARGUEMENTS SAKE:**

#### EUROPE and NORTH AMERICA

A recent edition of the Economist magazine Economist (March 8- 14, 1997: The Future of Warfare Page 15) pointed out that the U.S. advantage in military technology will put Europe at a disadvantage.

" Military technology will strengthen more than ever the military preeminence of the United States." The tremendous advantage in technology will also give them the same type of advantage to the United States in business. Nowhere is this more true than in the Internet.

The American preeminence is recognized. The only argument appears to be how far Europe is behind in the Internet: a year, two years? A more important question is whether Europe will ever catch up? The simple answer is no.

Why?

The first reason is that the Americans have too large a head start. The original ARPA net for electronic messaging was a U.S. Defence initiative during the Cold War. This initiative eventually spread to the research schools of university campuses, then to the rest of the campus and then off-campus.

The Internet quickly found its way into the social and business fabric of North America. Add to this the greater number of computers per capita in North America than Europe (in both offices and homes), the better-integrated American communication network, the design and manufacture of everything from computer chips to software to hardware, cheaper flat communication costs etc. All these factors give the U.S. a tremendous lead.

The Americans have even seized on the European CERN WEB concept and have now been taken over, resulting in the latest wave of Intranets and Extranets.

The "taken over" aspect has some interesting repercussions and future implications. The taking over has introduced the Trojan Horse of the English language as the new standard language of the Internet. What Latin was to the Roman Empire, English will be to the Internet Empire.

English has become the common language of the Internet- not so much the Email portion of the Net but definitely of the Web. If you do not believe this then any pick a country or a company. Countries as diverse as China to Sweden;

Cuba to Japan - and check their Web pages. All have a substantial portion of their Web information in English.

The result has been acceptance by countries or resistance to this Anglo- Saxon invasion . Already there was the American music invasion, then movies and now the Internet. Too much ! "While about 15.7 per cent of households in France have PCs , only 6.5% are equipped for Internet access and only 1.2 per cent connect to the Internet says a study by International Data Corp." (Network World Canada March 28,1997: Page3)

The reasons are simple to understand.

North American communication costs are cheaper than Europe. This is particularly so with the Internet. When in North America I pay a flat fee and that is all. In Europe, depending on the country, one pays a monthly fee plus time by the minute spent on the Internet. This depends on the time of day - and what country you are in. Some countries rates are very reasonable putting them on a par on what one would pay for a month's service in North America. Some countries rates put access to the Internet up in the luxury class - particularly in the emerging Eastern European countries.

With U.S. music and movies and MTV etc. came the American culture. Not just violence and rap music and fashions but also the American way of doing business.

Will the Internet just broaden the this incursion to Europe of U.S. culture and way of " doing business" Or on a more positive note is this trend the globalization of business using the Internet and English as common standard tools?

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