

# Cyberspace

## The Cyberpunk Project

Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts... A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding.

-- William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (page 51)

Present incarnation : the Internet. Also known as : the Net, the Web, the Matrix.

Word "cyberspace" was first used by William Gibson in his book *Burning Chrome* in 1982.

## Cyberspace Definitions

According to the Hacker's Jargon :

### cyberspace

/si:'br-spays'/ /n./

1. Notional "information-space" loaded with visual cues and navigable with brain-computer interfaces called "cyberspace decks"; a characteristic prop of cyberpunk science fiction. Serious efforts to construct virtual reality interfaces modeled explicitly on Gibsonian cyberspace are under way, using more conventional devices such as glove sensors and binocular TV headsets. Few hackers are prepared to deny outright the possibility of a cyberspace someday evolving out of the network (see network, the).
2. The Internet or Matrix (sense #2) as a whole, considered as a crude cyberspace (sense 1). Although this usage became widely popular in the mainstream press during 1994 when the Internet exploded into public awareness, it is strongly deprecated among hackers because the Internet does not meet the high, SF-inspired standards they have for true cyberspace technology. Thus, this use of the term usually tags a wannabee or outsider.
3. Occasionally, the metaphoric location of the mind of a person in hack mode. Some hackers report experiencing strong eidetic imagery when in hack mode; interestingly, independent reports from multiple sources suggest that there are common features to the experience. In particular, the dominant colors of this subjective cyberspace are often gray and silver, and the imagery often involves constellations of marching dots, elaborate shifting patterns of lines and angles, or moire patterns.

The space of interactivity between communication media. For example, the point of personal contact between two telephones. The mutual connective fabric of the conceptual universe. An encounter halfway between here and not-here. Can be visual, acoustic, or conceptual. A community linked through electronic media, experimenting with new forms of social organization. Soon to be a major virtual reality near you. The universe next door.

-- Henry W.Targowski in *Mark/Space*, 1994.

A new universe, a parallel universe created and sustained by the world's computers and communication lines. A world in which the global traffic of knowledge, secrets, measurements, indicators, entertainments, and alter-human agency takes on form : sights, sounds, presences never seen on the surface of the earth blossoming in a vast electronic night.

-- Michael Benedikt in *Cyberspace: First Steps*.

## **Cyberspace Features**

### **The Matrix**

The matrix is a black void, in which lies a fluorescent green plane termed the Orientation Grid. This forms the basis of the coordinate system within the Matrix - grid references or "Intersects" are used to pinpoint systems or places.

Above, upon and beneath the Orientation Grid there stand structures known as DOS Towers. These tend to be smooth polyhedral blocks with little definition other than a company logo or name. DOS Towers huddle together in groups that roughly correspond to major cities and conurbations. As a result, the distribution of systems in the Matrix is uneven, with bright clusters of DOS Towers amongst the featureless plains of the Orientation Grid.

Famous landmarks in the matrix are the Beanstalk Tower, which appears to be a distortion of the Orientation Grid soaring to the distant star of the Gateway Matrix ; The L5 Orbital ; and the far away spirals of the military systems.

### **Inside A DOS Tower**

The DOS Tower is the physical presence of a mainframe or group of mainframes in the Matrix. Also called Constructs, DOS Towers may take on any form. Usually they consist of a large but hollow structure containing many chambers or "Nodes" connected by corridors or "Channels".

### **Nodes**

Nodes are effectively computers in their own right. They may be assigned to particular real world devices, for example the stutterwarp drive of a starship or the security system of a corporate building. Nodes should be considered to be vast, immobile cyberdecks.

### **Channels**

Channels are merely the access routes between nodes. They do not possess any special features, but they may be concealed and / or closed.

Concealed channels are used to hide access paths to sensitive areas of a DOS Tower and to safeguard escape routes.

### **Ports**

The DOS Tower is connected to the outside world using special nodes called "Ports". These ports are dedicated

to the task of dealing with external communications and are normally the front line of defence against intrusion.

## **References & Links**

### [Interview with William Gibson about Cyberspace](#)

An excerpt of an interview published in Paris Review n°179

### [What is Cyberspace ?](#)

### [Situating Cyberspace](#)

The concluding essay of *Future Visions: New Technologies of the Screen*.

### [An Archeology of Cyberspaces](#)

Community, Virtuality, Mediation, Commerce

### [Society, Cyberspace and the Future](#)

How new interactive communication technology can enhance harmonious and functional communities at all scales worldwide ?

### [Cyberbeing and Cyberspace](#)

What is being and cyber-being ? A philosophical analysis.

### [Baudrillard in Cyberspace](#)

Internet, Virtuality and Postmodernity.

### [Cyberspace : Portal to Transcendence ?](#)

### [Visions of Excess](#)

Flesh, Cyberspace and Bio-technology.

### [The Neuroscience of Cyberspace](#)

New metaphors for the Self and its Boundaries.

### [The Radio Days of Cyberspace](#)

### [Cyberspace and the Changing Landscape of the Self](#)

### [Cyberspace](#)

An academic essay on cyberspace.

### [Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace](#)