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"If It's Too Bad to be True, It Could Be 'Disinformation'"(Martha Rosler, 1985)

Absolutno, Marcelo Expósito, Ingo Gunther, neurotransmitter, Walid Raad, Oliver Ressler, Martha Rosler, Keith Sanborn, David Thorne and Julia Meltzer, 0100101110101101.org

As you read these words, the Information Age explodes... inside and around you - with the Misinformation Missiles and Propaganda bombs of outright Information Warfare (NO, England pro-situ zine)

"Information" is chaos; knowledge is the spontaneous ordering of that chaos; freedom is the surfing of the wave of that spontaneity (Hakim Bey, The Information War)

Guy Debord once claimed that there is disinformation in all information. Disinformation is the "manufacture of consent" (Noam Chomsky). It is the power of lying by omission in the overload of information, in which elementary truths are easily buried. Blocking understanding is illustrated in today's news of the war on Iraq. According to Paul Virilio, the media industry benefits "from a curious depravity in the laws of democracy"; while not entitled to provide false information, our legislation allows the media to lie by omission, by ruling out news that might damage its interests. "The fourth state is thus the only one of our institutions that can function outside any effective democratic control, since the public at large does not get to hear any independent criticism...simply because such criticism does not stand a chance of being broadcast widely." (Virilio, The Media Complex). Surely, as Chomsky defends, one can always access information, yet Hakim Bey incisively adds, "provided one has a private income and a fanaticism bordering on insanity."

Not submitted yet to the interests of corporate media, the Internet has arguably been regarded as a truly democratic instrument for the dissemination of alternative information. However, free access to the Internet and the ubiquitous nature of cyberspace have come to represent a thread –what Vrilio refers to as the "information bomb" or "the weapons of mass disruption" that would attack communication systems that could bring down the stock market, the power plant system or the military control systems—making impossible to differentiate between information and disinformation. As a result of this, a new security paradigm overshadows the Internet and measures of control might be considered.

The first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held by the United Nations in 2003 talked about digital divide, knowledge dissemination, social interaction, political engagement, media, education, and health. Yet according to alternative groups, this language was used to mystify the continuing use of information to protect and advance the interests of global capital. Artists and activists ranging from indie and grassroots media to hacker collectives, have emerged to bring awareness and transparency to the control of information flows, to demand to exercise the freedom of information, or to bring out the information that is being omitted. They employ an array of different tactics (satire, documentary exposure, fictionalization of news, simulation, disruption) and diverse media such as installation, poster, video, radio or net.art.

David Thorne & Julia Meltzer's The Speculative Archive draws on existing collections of historical records to produce new documents, focusing on state secrecy as a memory practice and its effects on contemporary political dynamics. Oliver Ressler & Thorne's poster series Boom! of URL addresses use this "ubiquitous textual format of the 'new economy' to rehearse the fantasies, anxieties and defense mechanisms of the globalized capitalism confronting its own internal crises". Keith Sanborn's Operation Double Trouble, a detoured version of a 'propaganda' film jointly produced by the US Marine Corps and the US Navy to give the military "a human face", intends to expose the manipulations of the original to inflect the history of information warfare. In Walid Raad's dramatic documentary Hostage: The Bachar Tapes, the story that turns into fiction could be seen as a purely radical travesty, where we are confronted with the "mise en scene" of "appearance" in the mass media. The indiemedia collective neuroTransmitter has made com_muni_port, a portable radio broadcast unit created for short- range pedestrian broadcasting 'on the fly.' Ingo Gunther's plays the role of an "informant" in Worldprocessor using globes as a visual form to display social, political, economic and military facts.