

# My Internet is Broken

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**I have read the disclaimer of this document and understood that this text is not to offend anyone, that it is to be taken humorously, and the author wants to remain in peace without legal hassle.**

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The author hopes that this document might be a good read or even some fun to someone in the world and wishes to remain in peace.

## 3 Introduction

It is an old and common joke among experienced computer users to say: "my Internet is broken." Usually they refer to a temporal unavailability of a working Internet connection probably due to technical circumstances. The origins of this proverb lie in not-so-experienced computer users, like for example the mother or father of a coder, that used that or a similar phrase from time to time. Obviously "their Internet" –whatever that may be– was not broken, but their connection was. Anyway.

What most IT-workers and users don't seem to realize today is that their Internet is *really* broken. And worse: really large parts of the whole Inter-

net are!

## 4 History

The Internet as we know it consists of several parts. The most important is probably the WWW, the World Wide Web with its myriad of pages, closely followed by the email system. The idea of connecting several computers at different locations goes back to the US military in the sixties when they were eager to ensure their data storage. Shortly afterwards the science community started using the network for its own purposes.

Then suddenly in 1990 Tim Berners Lee at CERN in Geneva invented the world wide web by creating the HTTP, the HyperText Transport Protocol and the HTML, the Hypertext Markup Language. The idea, the fundamental principles, of the young WWW were a simple structured representation of (mainly scientific) information mixed with the highly inventive addition of hyper-links. Hey, what a great idea. Of course it was not totally new (think of SGML. . .) but history tells that this made a change. The pioneers of the WWW imagined a distributed pool of documents and all of them knitted together with links, thus forming a very, very large meta-document.

In this document the WWW shall be discussed. You probably can tell from your mailbox that something went wrong with the email thing anyway. ; - ).

## 5 Advertising

Some day there came the misuse of the HTML graphic capabilities in form of advertising. A small web-site could raise some money by showing ads on the top of its pages thus maybe paying the monthly online costs or the costs of the web-hosting. Not did the webmasters see they were being attacked. Attacked by the usual means of global capitalism: *give 'em money, buy them out.*

Not that capitalism is a bad thing *per se*, it's just too big a hungry beast to feed for much longer. Capitalism managed to quiet movements such as Hippie, Punk and Hip-Hop simply by buying it's

evangelists. No matter what the Sex Pistols might have said. But I digress.

Advertising banners made web pages weighing more, made them slower to load. All of a sudden you needed a ridiculous amount of that rare resource *bandwidth* to gather a comparatively small mass of information from the WWW. Of course banner blocking was a great discussion at that time, but that's not this story.

Now let us think: what is the idea of advertising? Obviously selling something. But that means that The Companies already diffused into the virtual realm. Once again this is not a bad thing *per se*. I really hate companies that have no –or even worse: a bad– web-site giving me all the information I want, it's just that companies bring a bunch of shit-flies that tend to create a lot of hassle.

First there are their advertising compartments and with them they brought pixel-exact design. They had done this for years in print so why should they adapt that creepy new standard that those freaky scientists came up with? Pixel-exact design and the much too long time it took to come up with a technology, an accepted standard, to produce it (just asking: why did it take such a long time?) killed structured information right away. It was more important to exactly determine where on the visitors screen a navigation button should show up than to arrange the content cleanly. What about an automatic and intelligent information agent? Huh? What about a visitor with a different browser? They are too few! What about people with low bandwidth? Uninteresting customers! What about the blind or otherwise disabled? Fuck them!

But it got even worse than that!

## 6 The Legal Era

So, the companies have infected this part of the Internet and companies are usually fighting a few wars. They are fighting against countries and their governments for better (that is profit increasing) laws. This involves a lot of lobbyism. They fight against organizations such as Greenpeace or trade

unions because of their stupid profit decreasing ideas and ideals. This involves long time generation of fear among the workers (fear for their jobs that is) such as visible in these days so much. And –most important– they fight each other. What am I supposed to think when I read that company AA sues company AB for patent infringement while at same time they are doing some other business perfectly well together? Weird. The means of that war are: courts and lawyers.

I really don't want to offend all the law-workers in one piece, I know some very kind and intelligent humans among them. On the other hand I have come across some really weird thinkers from that group, people compared to which that mad scientist you find in so many movies and books really appears like a very sensible guy.

And then the machinery sets to work. Since a web-page can be accessed worldwide it's content might be judged by whatever law seems fitting. Some extremely arrogant countries really believe that a person living somewhere on this globe should be put under *their* laws when performing some Internet stunt. Because a stunt it has become. In Germany there was recently a case filed that addressed an Italian restaurant in some city which had a very common name. Honestly, in every city in Germany with more than 50 000 inhabitants you'll probably find an Italian restaurant named "Bella Italia" and one called "Bello Fiore". And that is perfectly fine because they all act *locally*. But no! You only have to get a trademark on one of those names and find those restaurants that have a web-site (which probably tells nothing more than when the location is open, where it is and maybe some prices), since a web-site is globally available. Hm, who knows maybe "bello fiore" means "suck my dick" in one of those languages that I don't know?

We all have read one or the other Internet court decision that appear really stupid to those who understand what the Internet and the WWW are all about. I for one have lost a good deal of money in such a process when I played in a band which had a name similar to that of a large candy producer. That band had played an amazing total of 5 gigs, mostly for free drinks, and was sued for an

even more amazing sum of 1 Million DM (German Marks). Huh?

## 7 Consequences

So, today when you are so bold to create a web-site, no matter what it is all about, it's best to consult a lawyer to be really sure. In Germany you probably need to have a so called *Impressum* which states that you are responsible for that work and probably contains your postal address (and the spammer says thanks...). And remember to be very, very careful when choosing the domain name. Not only you might accidentally use a registered trademark or the name of a company or a domain-name that might be close to such a thing or a domain-name that might just sound close to such a thing, no you might even use your own name and loose in the court because the right of a company which has the same name is somehow righter than yours. And when you just show your private photo collection you'd better ask all the persons that might be in the background of a photograph for permission, and are you really sure that no one already took a shot from the same view as you did and is selling the image over the Internet? It is also a good idea not to speak too loud. Don't let your web-site become too well known because if they just search enough they'll find something to sue you for. And be careful of what you say, you might offend someone. Ah yes, don't forget to add a disclaimer for the content of linked pages, that are obviously written and maintained by someone else but might be connected to your page because of that link thing (which certain people seemingly didn't understand at all). And...

You know what? Don't link to other pages, don't provide any content, any information. Best not to have a web-page at all!

Man, I think my Internet is broken!

## 8 Disclaimer

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