

17. Feb. 2014

von benkamis

 in Cyber Security,
 Popkultur, Security
 Culture,
 Sicherheitskultur,
 Zivilgesellschaft

Kommentare (0)

The Day the World Fought Back (Well, some of us pretended)

von Ben Kamis

On 11 February, **the World Fought back against Mass Surveillance**. See those capital letters? They denote Things that Matter – somehow. We don't necessarily know who 'We' are, what the 'World' is, nor whether the Mass Surveillance We're against is the big and sexy kind run by acronymized (foreign) government agencies that We all recently learned about through Edward Snowden or the everyday kind conducted by means of cookies, computer profiles and GPS data we all send to whomever is watching in the course of a normal day's activities, like checking Facebook, leaving the house to buy some bread or sending family pictures over the holidays via email. But 'We' 'Fought' 'Them', or maybe 'It'.



How We see Ourselves

As briefly as I can, I'm going to try to explain why this is bunk. In short, we are not who We think We are and nor are They, and that the Fight never happened.

First, what's the deal with this momentous day? The Day We Fight Back is a **brand**, not an event, and it is supposed to refer to a day of coordinated activity among digiphile **civil society groups**, commercial websites and '**netizens**'. The phrase makes reference to pivotal scenes and story lines in several science fiction movies where humans (re)conquer the world from the hands, or circuits, of the technically superior and evil agents, like The

SOCIAL MEDIA



SUCHE

TWITTER FEED

Ben Kamis: The concept of #cyberpeace is linguistic trolling. Cyberpeace: post-war is war, only more so <http://t.co/fkaHhcgekK> #cyberwar
 ungefähr 21 Stunden her von &s

Wer wissen will was #cyberpeace ist, sollte wissen was dieser sog. #cyberkrieg ist: Matthias Schulze dazu bei uns <http://t.co/LyvFdE29dN>
 8. Dezember 2014, 11:08 von &s

Neue #Jobs für Politikwissenschaftler_innen!
<http://t.co/f3vSzfJpMG>
 5. Dezember 2014, 9:03 von &s

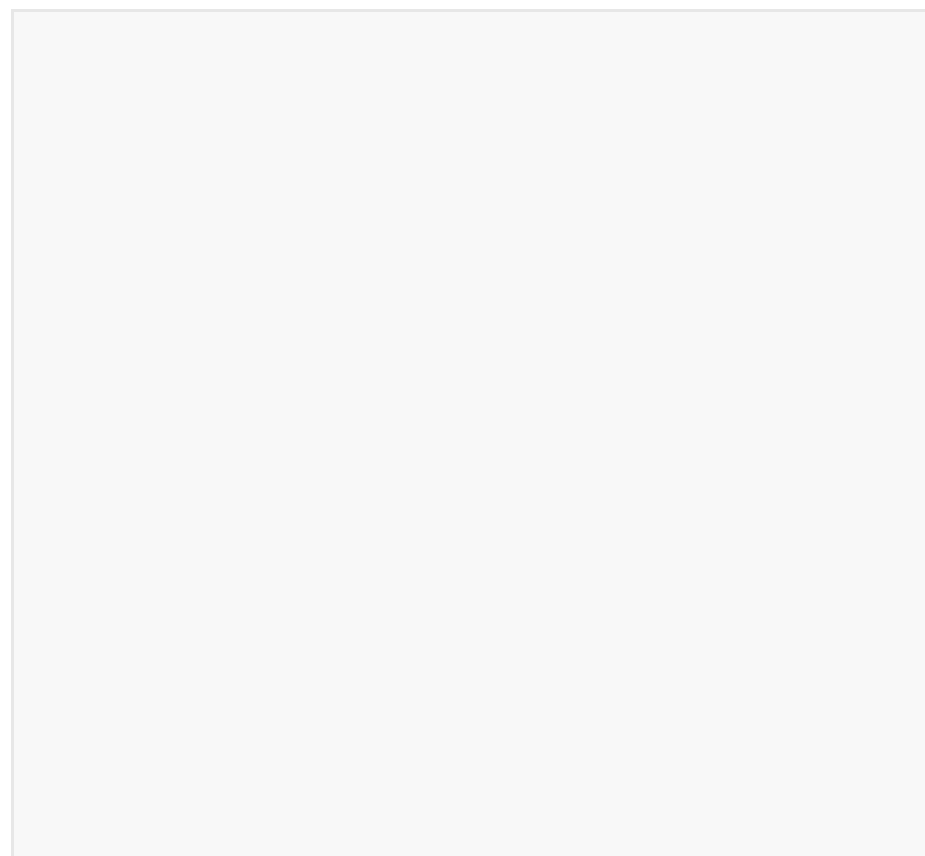
TAGS

bundeswehr China Cyber Security cybersicherheit Cyber Spionage Cyberwar Deutschland diplomatie Ethik EU Europa Japan job jobs Jobsuche Krim Leaking Leaks Netzpolitik nsa Obama Politikwissenschaft Politikwissenschaften protest Putin R2P Resilienz Responsibility to Protect russland Sanktionen

Terminator series, Independence Day, and the Matrix. The particular date was chosen because it coincides with the anniversary of the day when **Aaron Swartz**, a young, impetuous and emotionally labile programmer-cum-poster boy, committed suicide while being prosecuted for copyright tomfoolery. The phrase was engineered to touch your heart, and when a message aims at sentimentality, you're well-advised to treat its content with circumspection.

And who are 'We' anyway? Presumably, We are the users, i.e. those who use the Internet and for whom its limitless wonders are ostensibly for. But how many of us received Our message? 'we' are perhaps far fewer and less engaged than We think We are. The important part seems to be the affirmation that We exist, even if We aren't in a position to do anything much. And where do We reach each other with this message? Generally, we do it over websites, including well-known ones, like the **Electronic Frontier Foundation** and **Reddit**, as well as more obscure and custom websites to generate social media buzz, like **thedaywefightback.org**.*

But here we see the disconnect between the users and what is being used to surveil. Websites are just that: locations on the web. But most of the surveillance worth worrying about can make use of the entire Internet, which consists basically of any chip connected to most of the other chips and the transmission media of those connections. The *Internet* includes the satellites that monitor the GPS data of your phone and the corporate servers of those buying the data; it includes the government computers that store your personal, official data and the cables by which it is transmitted **when the government sells it**; it includes your nephew's baby pictures and the data mining software that has now calculated the utility of showing you Lego vs. My Little Pony ads.



Schutzverantwortung Sicherheit
Sicherheitskonferenz **snowden**
Stellenangebote
Stellenanzeigen
Syrien Transparenz **Ukraine**
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Wikileaks
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Überwachung

WP Cumulus Flash tag cloud by **Roy Tanck** requires **Flash Player** 9 or better.

BELIEBT KOMMENTARE NEU

Hell yeah, it's Political Science!
Wissenschaftliche Podcasts

Das Internet darf ein cyberfreier
Raum sein

Deutschlands Irak-Politik –
Verantwortung nach außen,
Intransparenz nach innen.

Wir haben Geburtstag!

It's not Cyberwar, stupid!

Peter
Dem Fazit kann nur zugestimmt
werden, es sind dringend Dialoge
notwendig die deeskalierend auf
die...

Stellenangebote Sucher
Echt interessante Stellenangebote.
Mich persönlich sprechen ja die
Kaderstellen „Project Manager
Berlin“ und die Studentenjobs...

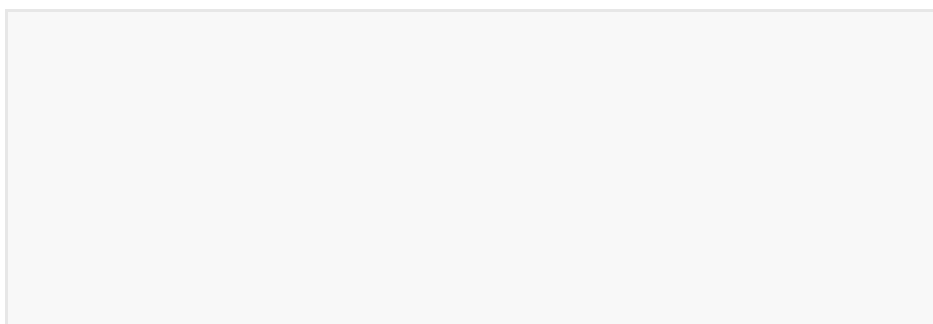
seditioni
Danke Jochen! :3

Jochen
Na dann aber herzlichen
Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag! Und
auf die nächsten drei Jahre!
Schönes/r Blog!...



He's using the Web, and he knows it

To the extent that this Fight is about the Web, it can let Us think that We are the Web's users, which is a questionable, but seductive, assumption. It's seductive because We tend to use the Web much more deliberately than we do the Internet. This allows us the conceit that We are fighting mass surveillance, when in fact we're just supporting one or another website. It's questionable because we use the Internet much more unconsciously than we do the Web and can avoid it only with difficulty. The Internet with all its invisible but increasingly indispensable manifestations is a much better surveillance target for that reason: we use it more often, and we're rarely even conscious of being watched doing it, which makes the data so much more juicy!



Sicherheits-Experte
Guter Artikel zur Sicherheitspolitik!

Cyberpeace: post-war is war, only more so

It's not Cyberwar, stupid!

Stellenanzeigen November 2/2

Ankündigung: Blogforum zum Thema Cyberpeace

Konferenzbericht aus Göttingen: Politisches Handeln in digitalen Öffentlichkeiten

KATEGORIEN

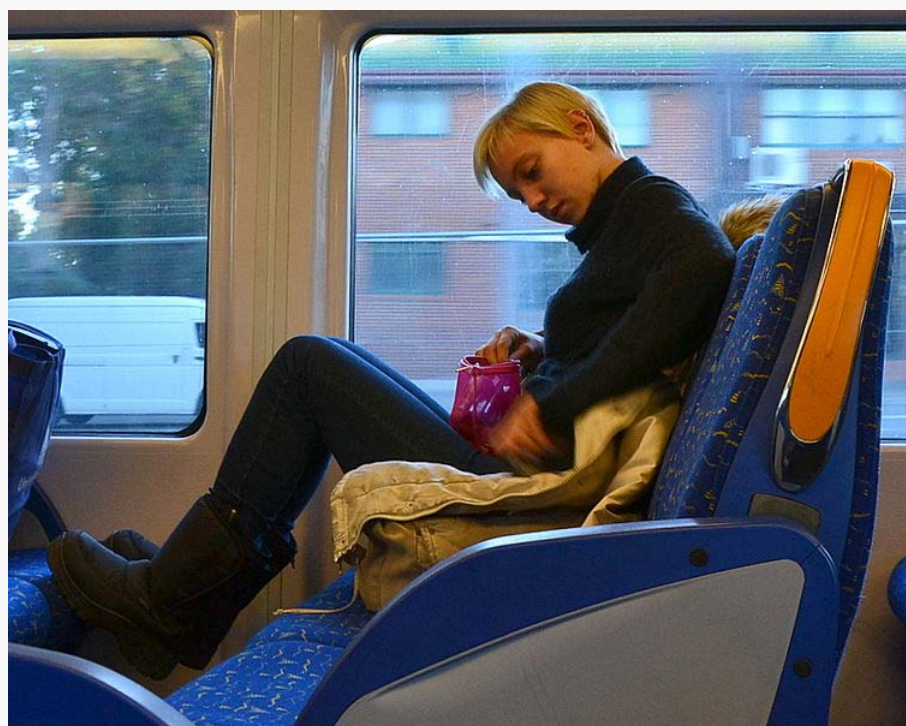
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Drohnen (15)



The Internet is using her, and she doesn't know it

So while We use the Web, the Internet largely uses us. And this tells us a lot about the character of Our Fight. In **a condescending book** written generations ago to instruct young women how to become better housewives (Germans call this 'Querlesen', my passion), Margery Wilson wrote "A lot of girls write to me asking how to recognize when they have truly fallen in love. You need not ask whether you have fallen in love any more than you need ask whether you have fallen down the stairs." This is true, and it applies also to fights. As **my dear bosses** paraphrase Clausewitz, "War begins with the act of defence, because until then there is no combat." Fighting, poetically enough, is like love. When it happens, you'll know it with certainty. It will require sacrifice, and it will hurt. (Happy Valentine's Day!)

But Our Fight is a phony war. The most obvious proof is that the Other side is not fighting back. They, and it matters little whether you consider Them to be Big Brother or Big Corporate, have already won. Your browsing activity **is trackable**, no matter how often you delete cookies. If you have a cell phone, your rough movement is trackable, and if you have a GPS-enabled smartphone, your precise location is trackable. Because it is so broadly accepted, the debate about how to regulate with this invasive surveillance has shifted from whether or not it should be allowed at all to whether it should be **legally required**. Think of this from a tactical perspective: as soon as the idea for the Day We Fight Back was communicated electronically, those it was directed against already knew who was involved and of what it consisted.

As a child I visited a cultural heritage site illustratively called 'Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump'. It is a steep cliff in the middle of the Canadian prairie, and the Blackfoot tribe would drive plains bison over kilometres through pre-designated channels right up to the cliff, and the bison would be forced to run right off to their deaths. A good day provided more food than the hunters could eat in a season. But this is a really interesting phenomenon if you

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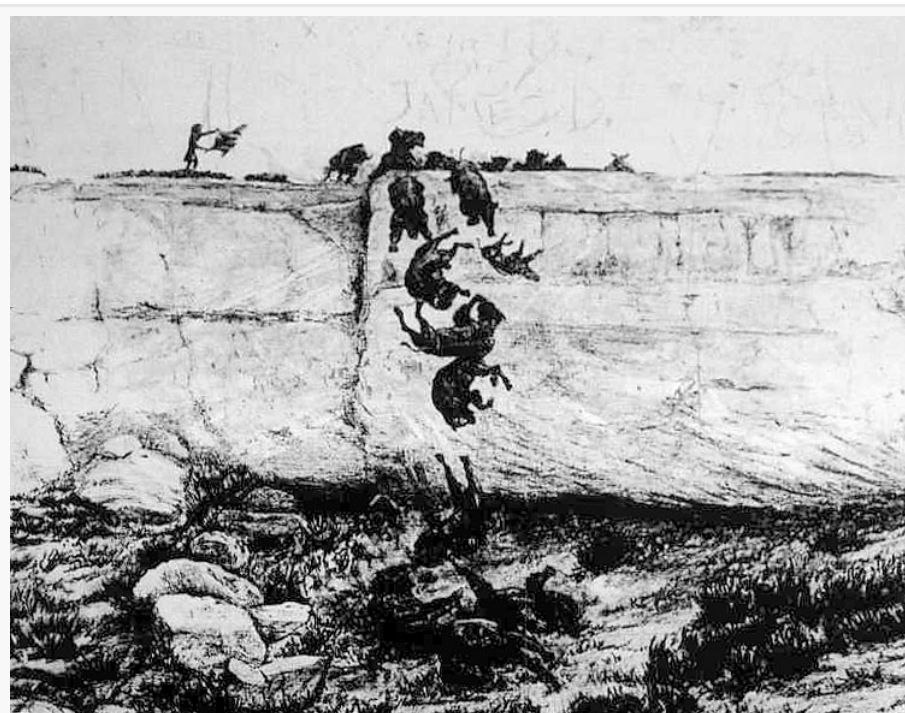
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BLOGROLL

 Arbeitskreis soziale Bewegungen

consider from the perspective of the bison. From their point of view, they were escaping to freedom, avoiding the hunters' weapons the whole way. There would be a sense of danger, but no real conflict. Only when it was too late would it have dawned on them that their flight was leading them off the edge of a cliff, as the hunters had planned all along.




How They see us
(I'm second from the left)

But who knows? Tomorrow's another Day. Maybe we'll show up. Maybe there'll be a fight.

*You'll notice that this link leads you to the *international* version of the website. we are apparently not as universal or united as We might like to think.

**« Stellenanzeigen Februar 1/2
Where Is My Mind? Koordination in der europäischen Netzpolitik »**

-  Augen geradaus
-  Dan Drezner
-  Dart-Throwing Chimp
-  David Campbell
-  de.hypotheses.org
-  Demokratieforschung Göttingen
-  Duck Of Minerva
-  Future and Politics
- Hylaeen Flow
-  Internet und Politik
-  IR Blog
-  Just Security Blog
-  justsecurity.org
-  Killer Apps
-  Kings Of War
-  netzpolitik.org
- perception
-  shabka.org
-  Terrorismus in Deutschland
-  theorieblog.de
-  Verfassungsblog
-  Vom Bohren harter Bretter
-  whistleblower-net.de

ARCHIV

Wähle den Monat

Bislang keine Kommentare

Einen Kommentar hinterlassen

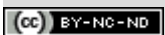
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Kommentar

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