

THE NETWORK STATE

by Balaji Srinivasan

6. VR builds a capital in the cloud, AR mirrors it on the land. Virtual reality (and more generally the open metaverse) are yet another way in which the obligate ties to the land are being cut.

We can now build full castles in the sky, and then with augmented reality project them onto the earth.

For a network archipelago or network state, that's a powerful way to link distributed physical territories together into a coherent whole.

7. Social disintermediated the media. Again, this one is almost too obvious, but social media allowed anyone to build a massive following online, it disintermediated the legacy media, and (in combination with messaging apps and related tools) it made one's contacts infinitely portable.

8. State-appointed leadership has root over, as a complement to a public chain like Bitcoin or Ethereum that serves as an external check and balance.

We can create decentralized identities similar to ENS and SNS to serve as digital passports for the network state, defining citizenship on the basis of single sign-on access to network state services.

8. GAFAM showed us what's possible, startup/VC showed us how.

None of the web3 world would be possible without the web2 and web1 worlds. Google showed us what could be done from a garage.

Facebook showed us what could be built from a dorm room. The entire startup industry has shown us that big things can be done on a shoestring.

Without the trillion dollar companies and billion user networks, we wouldn't feel like we could build million person network states.

In particular, as Gilles Babinet observed, once you see partial transfers of sovereignty in the digital world, you know more may come.

From the postal service to Gmail, from taxi medallions to Uber and Lyft, from the banks to Bitcoin, from the maps to Google Maps, from the FCC to WhatsApp, from the courts to moderators, legacy states control less and digital networks control more.

Of course, the former lack technical competence and the latter lack democratic legitimacy, which is exactly the problem the network state solves.

9. Land becomes elastic. As Will Rogers once said, "buy land, they ain't making any more of it." Or are they?

Seasteaders and the artificial islands built in Dubai show that land supply is perhaps more elastic than we think.

We also know you can build cruise ships. So it's possible that we could start reopening the frontier physically as well, not just digitally.

This isn't incompatible with Georgism, which argues that the inelastic supply of land means there should be only one tax, a land tax; it just means the supply is not perfectly inelastic.

If you combine the two concepts, if more value creation goes online and away from the physical world, you get the idea of being able to (a) print more land, and (b) partially commoditize existing nation states as providers of land and natural resources.

10. Telepresence changes the nature of immigration. The next step after simply projecting in an AR avatar is to dial up a robot on the other side of the world and start walking around.

This should in theory be feasible by combining (a) Boston Dynamics' legged robots, (b) DoubleRobotics' DoublePresent iPads on wheels, (c) Oculus Quest headset, and (d) omnidirectional treadmill.

That combination of devices could furnish immersive control of a humanoid robot anywhere on the globe.

11. Bits reopen innovation in atoms. Innovation in areas like biomedicine, robotics, and energy is not upstream of the network state, it's downstream of it.

The network state solves the problem posed by Thiel, Cowen, and J Storrs Hall. We're using bits to reopen innovation in atoms, because innovation in atoms has been blocked by regulations, which are in turn created by the US establishment and exported all over the world through harmonization.

The network state uses digital technology to gain sufficient consent in the cloud to build a community, crowdfund territory, and eventually gain recognition as a sovereign polity. Once we do so, we can return innovation to the physical world.

The nation state was enabled by maps of the world, tools to communicate laws, and the guns to enforce them.

The network state is enabled by the creation of a new world (the internet), the software to code and communicate policies, and the cryptography to enforce them,

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