

# Computer science and technology : historiography V (3)

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## VIDEO GAMES cont.

<i>Detroit become human</i>	
Recall Center No. 5	(android 'death camp')
Deviant	android having deviated from expected, programmed behavior
Kara, Alice, Luther, Ralph	notable androids (and possible 'deviants')
"Battle for Detroit" ch.	revolution
<i>Mother series</i>	
Mr. Saturn's and Saturn Valley	free healthcare, housing, leisure
Boney	dog companion / character
Kumatora	pink hair girl
Magypsies	gender bending wizards-witches-fairies (e.g. Ionia, whose favorite are pickles.....)
the Nowhere Islands	Mother 3's world



II. *Mother* : [1,2] Earthbound's Saturn Valley village entrance, doctor [3] Mother 3 Ionia's house



<i>Deus Ex, System Shock</i> writers	
Ultima Underworld II	Austin Grossman ("Lead Writer", "Conversations") [Player's guide]. LookingGlass
System Shock	Austin Grossman (under "designers") [game]. LookingGlass
Deus Ex	Sheldon Pacotti ("dialogue"), Austin Grossman ("additional dialogue"), Chris Todd ("in-game text...") [in order, manual]. Ion Storm, Romero et al.'s studio
Deus Ex Invisible War	Credits : Sheldon Pacotti ("lead writer") [manual]. Ion Storm

Note : Doug Church is credited "Project Leader" and "Lead Programmer" for *Ultima Underworld II* [Player's guide], then "Programming" for *System Shock* [game]. Spector : "Producer" [UU2,SS] and "Project Director" [DE].

It is interesting to note how even in games like *System Shock*, programmers appear comparatively late in credits (past 10th category): If not done yet, a history or their changing place and importance in video games would be worthwhile writing.

## BOOKS

— Gerardo Con Diaz. 2019. *Software Rights: How patent law transformed software development in America*. Yale Univ. Press

Chapter 1 follows Richard Hamming from Manhattan Project to Bell Labs, 2 is dedicated to IBM in the 1950s-60s; part three covers the personal computer (Altair, Apple etc.)...

— *The X-Files* related literature

As succesful works do, The X-Files has generated a pile of literature – official, unofficial, fiction, non-fiction, fan fiction, canonical so called etc. – that is hard to quantify, keep track of; an attempt to offer a selection or overview is made. Roughly, there appear to be 3 waves : beginning and end of the original series, as well as a renaissance coinciding with the new series

<i>The Official Guide to...</i> 6 vol. (1995-2001)	Lowry (1-2), Meisler (3-5), Shapiro (6) w/ Sarah Stegall. Vol. 1 covers the first two seasons, 2 the third season, 6 the seventh
<i>The X-Files Magazine</i> (1990s)	interviews (e.g. Gilligan), features (e.g. "Top 20 villains")...
Jane Goldman's <i>Book of the Unexplained</i> . 2 vol.. (1995/7)	attempts to connect series content with 'real' events
<i>X Marks the Spot. On Location With The X-Files</i> (1999)	filming locations i.e. Vancouver
Anne Simon's <i>The Real Science Behind the X-Files</i> (2001)	books like these, i.e. offering to give a scientific perspective are usually published for popular series, esp. sci-fi
<i>The Official Collection</i> . 3 vol.. Titan (2016)*	episode guides, interviews (e.g. King, who wrote "Chinga" in S5), features (e.g. special effects)...
<i>The X-Files Origins</i> 1: Agent of Chaos, 2: Devil's Advocate (2017)*	Mulder and Scully's background stories, as teenagers*
<i>The Official Archives</i> (2020)*	collection of 'facsimile'-style case files

\*" *Chris Carter, the creator of The X-Files himself, deemed them "canon," or rather, the "official" backstories*" Entertainment Weekly, Jan. 2017]

— Krauss, Lawrence. 1997. *The Physics of Star Trek*. Basic Books

One of the early examples in this genre ('The science of...', 'The physics of...', etc.); written by a physics professor.

Hawking, (who appeared in the series), writes in the foreword : " *Science fiction like Star Trek is not only good fun but it*

*also serves a serious purpose, that of expanding the human imagination."*

Krauss addresses the billion dollar question of how replicators – a technology which could usher in communism or a society of non-work in the right hands and under democratic policies, are supposed to function on p. 81 :

*" Possessing something physicists can't usually call upon-namely, artistic license-they introduced "Heisenberg compensators," which allow "quantum resolution" of objects. When an interviewer asked the Star Trek technical consultant Michael Okuda how Heisenberg compensators worked, he merely replied, "Very well, thank you!"*

*Heisenberg compensators perform another useful plot function. One may wonder, as I have, why the transporter is not also a replicator of life-forms. After all, a replicator exists aboard starships that allows glasses of water or wine to magically appear in each crew member's quarters on voice command. Well, it seems that replicator technology can operate only at "molecular-level resolution" and not "quantum resolution." This is supposed to explain why replication of living beings is not possible. It may also explain why the crew continually complains that the replicator food is never quite the same as the real thing, and why Riker, among others, prefers to cook omelets and other delicacies the old-fashioned way. "*

— Johnson, Patrick. 2017. *The Physics of Star Wars*. Adams Media

(Yet another scientist obviously inspired and stimulated by science fiction...; again, written by a physics professor.)

*Star Wars* like *Star Trek*, coming from vastly different political outlooks however, at least have in common, in addition to taking place in space..., to feature and require many computations that go from flight instruments to ballistics to advanced future technologies e.g. transporters or replications - previously evoked.

Arguably, *Star Trek* is much more complex than *Star Wars*, which at its core is a Hollywood, thousand times rehashed Nazis vs Americans tale, wherein Americans are comically supposed to be "Rebels" and the "Empire", with its black uniforms and red flag, is some absolute evil (except the black mustache has now become a black helmet...) The great "innovation" of new *Star Wars* material being to suggest that maybe the good guys aren't always so perfect and also have their gray moral zones. Gosh, don't overload the audience!... Consistently the best that *Star Wars* can produce takes place far away from that overarching, dual conflict (most recently, *The Mandalorian*).

## POPULAR CULTURE : NEW X-FILES cont.



II. *The X-Files* S10, ep. 2, 3



detail : hotel owner explaining how "9 11" made peeping holes necessary...



		writer notes
S10E1	The team gets back together after 15 years and drifting away (Mulder, Skully, Skinner). Introduces Tad O'Mally a talk show host in the fashion of e.g. Alex Jones, later called "an Internet lunatic"	Chris Carter
S10E2	Nugenics bio. tech start-up, Also : LGBT (internalized homophobia in Indian tech worker), DoD, Snowden mentions.	
S10E3	A meta episode on many levels : First the premise, a monster who transforms into a man. Then current technology and politics compared to the 1990s : cf. "everyone has a camera these days" due to phones, and "That's a security feature, I had to put it in after 9 11" (peeping tom)	Darin Morgan
S10E4	Displacement, 'relocation' of homeless. Hero takes revenge - an idea made manifest, possibly.	
S10E5	"terrorism", Texas, racism...	
S10E6	Mulder's disappearance. Anthrax. CRISPR Cas9. Depopulation as answer to ecological crisis, with a chosen surviving elite.	Anne Simon, Margaret Fearon, Chris Carter

Season 10 marks a big turn, compared with most of the original X-Files from a conspiracy about aliens to - what is called - a "conspiracy of men" (in the original this was already alluded to); who use alien technology for their own purposes, going back to Roswell in 1947. This continuous story is the object of the multi-part 'My Struggle' (each season's start and end), and alternates with so called "monster of the week" episodes best represented by episode 3, a reversed Werewolf.

Through this, *The X-Files* joins a multitude of media offering a realistic scenario for the future : the exploitation of space for profit and in the interest of an elite.

Ep. 2 of the new series recalls the best of the old X-Files, when it comes to tech, which is handled with insight and a critical eye : starting with the ridiculous names that start-ups favor (Nugenics), the myth of the "genius" founder (Augustus Goldman), all the falsehoods of "philanthropy" (done through a hospital), etc.

Ep. 3, while neither very original or courageous, makes a grand mockery of post 9/11 security and surveillance (a local innkeeper justifies spying as being the direct result of the events...)

Ep. 6., the finale, is on a whole other level and goes far beyond the vanities of liberal humour : ecological crisis, human behavior are linked and a devil's argument for forced depopulation is made (by the Smoking man)

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- M.  what you're doing (...) it's sickness.
- Sm. It's sickness not doing it. (...)
      I didn't set out to destroy the world. People did.
- M.  You can't justify your actions.
- Sm. We just had the hottest year on record, on planet Earth. I didn't do that.
      I'm not responsible for the 40% loss of bird life; or the decimation of the megafauna.
- M.  So just murder all the people?!
- Sm. Aliens predicated all this. They saw it happening to themselves.

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This episode, whose key dialogue is happening around 25m, feels disturbingly prescient with its combined themes of epidemics and ecological catastrophe – as some of the original X-Files could be.

Not only that, but the means to achieve it are explained : Cas9, genome editing (here, the tool used for population decrease)

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- S. [It] removes the Adenosine Deaminase gene from your DNA; remove the ADA gene, and your immune system
  will simply vanish.
- E. How does the virus remove the ADA gene?
- S. A process called CRISPR ...
- E. ... Cas9 : RNA and a protein cutting genes at exact locations.

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In turn, this dialogue at about 30m appears to reference research later leading to the Nobel Prize in chemistry of 2020.

O'Malley, with his conspiracy theorist airs, grave tone and stern looks a la Jones, still manages an early description of the collapse of civilization that Season 10 culminates in, ends on. His show is web-based, and at some point shut down (for 6 weeks(?)). He accuses, what he refers to as, mainstream media of not doing a good job, "failing to cover the story".

## COMPUTER SCIENCE PAPERS : ANONYMITY NETWORKS

The Invisible Internet Project, or I2P, does not enjoy the same popularity as Tor. A collection of recent studies done on this other network follows,

— Nguyen Phong Hoang, Sadie Doreen, Michalis Polychronakis. 2019. "Measuring I2P Censorship at a Global Scale". FOCI

*"we measured at a global scale the availability of four different I2P services: the official homepage, its mirror site, reseed servers, and active relays in the network. (...) With different techniques for detecting domain name blocking, network packet injection, and block pages, we discovered I2P censorship in five countries: China, Iran, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait."*

— Nguyen Phong Hoang, Panagiotis Kintis, Manos Antonakakis, Michalis Polychronakis. 2018. "An Empirical Study of the I2P Anonymity Network and its Censorship Resistance". IMC

*"we measure properties including population, churn rate, router type, and the geographic distribution of I2P peers. We find that there are currently around 32K active I2P peers in the network on a daily basis."*

Here, members of the I2P thanked in the acknowledgments are "Sadie Doreen, str4d, echelon, meeh, psi, slumlord, and zzz."