
The Voluntaryist

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Computers and Privacy: National Identification Revisited from a Voluntaryist Perspective

by Carl Watner

In the Summer of 2019, we began the process of creating an e-book of my 2004 anthology, NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS: ESSAYS IN OPPOSITION. Hans Sherrer, who was the mover and shaker behind this project, made the suggestion that a new chapter be added to discuss the developments in the field of national identification. Hence, the impetus for researching and writing this article.

The most significant development in this field was the passage of the REAL ID Act by the United States Congress, and signed by President George W. Bush on May 11, 2005. This legislation emanated from the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the federal government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as drivers' licenses." The purpose of the Act was to establish minimum guidelines for state-issued identification and drivers' licenses. Its intention was to "improve the reliability and accuracy of these state-issued IDs, which would inhibit terrorists' ability to evade detection using fraudulent identification." Under the timeline of the law, beginning October 1, 2020, every person 18 years of age or older will need a REAL ID-compliant document to board a commercially operated airline flight or to enter a federal building or nuclear power plant.

According to Wikipedia's "analysis of the law," the REAL ID Act was based upon the fact that drivers' licenses, which are the most common type of ID used in the United States, were issued by the states, not the federal government. Since there is no federally issued national identification card, state-issued drivers' licenses have become the "de facto standard form of identification" in this country. Before the full implementation of the Act, each state set its own requirements for issuance of the license. This included the documentation to support an application for a license, the appearance of the license, what information was contained on the card, as well as determining what data was saved in the state's database.

The REAL ID Act changed all that. Every license issued by a state must contain the full legal name, signature, date of birth, gender, a unique identifying number, primary address, and a front-facing photograph of the applicant. In addition, all identification cards must also have "specific security features intended to prevent tampering, counterfeiting, or duplication of the document

for fraudulent purposes" and "present data in a common, machine-readable format" via bar code or smart card technology. These requirements were determined by the federal Department of Homeland Security, which also mandated that each state must share "its motor vehicle database with all other states."

There has been extended controversy over whether "the REAL ID Act institutes a national identification card system" since it leaves "the issuance of cards and the maintenance of databases in state hands," despite the fact that the Act sets forth national standards. In an apparent effort to mask this reality, the Department of Homeland Security refuses to call it a national id system. The REAL ID Act puts all the elements in place for a national identification card, the only difference being that the card is issued at the state level and not the federal level – but the outcome is the same. The goal is to have every person in the United States carry some sort of id card so he or she can be readily identified by government authorities. Furthermore, the Act places no limits on how the new state-issued cards may be used. Over time, they will undoubtedly be required "to vote, collect a Social Security check, access Medicaid, open a bank account," enter a national park, get married, apply for a passport, or buy a gun. Some of this has already come to pass. In short, the Act has made it much easier for government to track and locate any person on American soil, and to discover the intimate details of that person's life. ["Real ID Act"]

How did all this become possible? In one word: computers. Modern-era computers were developed by the British and American military during World War II to make their killing more efficient. [Anonymous, 4] Then in 1958, President Eisenhower requested funds to create ARPA, the Advanced Research Projects Agency, to begin study of how to construct and organize a national super-computing network that might be used in the event of a nuclear attack. By the early to mid-1970s, progress had been made and several independent computer nodes had been established at major universities. In 1976, Apple Computer was founded by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. By the mid-1980s, IBM had launched its first personal computer, and Microsoft had created DOS, its first disk operating system. Then the internet was off to the races, when the World Wide Web was created in 1990. Amazon was founded by Jeff Bezos in 1994. In 1995, Microsoft released its first browser for Windows. Google was started in 1998, and by the end of the year 2000, there were over twenty million websites on the internet.

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Facebook, the last of the Big Four (the others being Google, Amazon, and Apple) technology companies, did not start until 2004, but before that a major international event took place that changed the face of the computing industry. The destruction of the World Trade Center, the Twin Towers, and the deaths of over 2900 people on September 11, 2001, pushed the world of government and commercial computing in a totally different direction from where they had been headed. Prior to 9/11, the computing industry had been primarily oriented toward pleasing its consumer base by bringing masses of people together in order to sell them stuff and by offering what appeared to be free services, such as free web search, free email, free social networking, and free ads. In return, users had to give up much of their personal information, which was then collected, digested, and regurgitated in a commercially useful format. [Scheer, 71]

The attacks of 9/11 brought massive increases in government spending on computer-assisted spy operations, leading to an alliance between private and public agencies that was focused more on security than privacy. [Zuboff, 112] Government agencies, such as NSA, the FBI, and CIA, were able to do an end run around the Constitution's prohibition against unreasonable searches by turning to their "corporate accomplices (including many information-brokerage companies) and buy access to the enormous amount of data they had already collected about" Americans and foreigners. [Staples, xii] At the same time, the tech companies were attracted to hefty government contracts.

All of the Big Four have profited from this "unholy" private-government alliance. Despite the fact that the personal information and data collected by these companies was "alarmingly intrusive and pervasive," most internet users had no objection to this information-gathering so long as they believed that the data would not be shared with the government. [Scheer, 55] Then came Edward Snowden who, in mid-2013, disclosed the existence of

numerous National Security Agency's mass surveillance programs and evidence of secret collusion between the government and the private companies. His whistle-blowing showed that these companies had been "adjuncts of the US government, and by extension, of the governments of other nations where they" did business. [Scheer, 207] Since "every government in the world claimed the power to compel disclosure of this data," computer users lost their innocence and realized that the tech companies were largely at the mercy of their respective governments. [Zuboff, 118]

Even before 9/11, Google had a policy of collecting as much information as possible about its users, and it continued pressing forward even after Snowden's revelations. "Everything in the world was to be known and rendered by Google, accessed through Google, and indexed by Google in its infinite appetite for behavioral surplus." [Zuboff, 139] Its drive to collect data included monitoring emails, "digitalization of books, the collection of personal information through Wi-Fi and camera capabilities, the capture of voice communications, the bypassing of privacy settings," manipulation and retention of search data, the tracking of smartphone location data, wearable technologies and facial recognition capabilities, and the secret collection of student data for commercial purposes. [Zuboff, 137]. Google Maps began in 2005, and relied on up-to-date satellite imagery and aerial photography. Google's Street View was launched in 2007 with the purpose of providing "interactive panoramas from positions along many streets in the world." ["Google Street View"] Despite legal opposition to many of its programs, and Congressional investigation into its activities, Google has persisted in its drive to map the world.

"The path to the peak is arduous, but it has always been that way. It is the path of truth through a valley of lies. "

- Peter Ragnar

How did Google persevere in the face of public opposition, law suits, and government investigations? It has been successful for a number of reasons. First, no one is forced to join Google or use the services of any of the other Big Four tech companies. They are tools of modern life from which people choose to benefit. [Schneier, 71] Secondly, Google and the others have benefited from the state of exception precipitated by the events of 9/11. People were generally willing to allow information gathering to continue as a response to the fears of possible terrorist attacks. Thirdly, Google has had a strong incentive to stay the course because of the money it receives from government contracts. Finally, Google has determined its own rules of engagement and moved much faster than government law. Since there was little computer legislation on the books, Google simply forged ahead

and literally established its own modus operandi as law of the land.

However, even before Google was started, the other major players faced a legal challenge in 1995. Were service providers liable for what their users posted? The answer to this question would determine how widely the internet would be used. In 1995, a New York state judge ruled that Prodigy Communications (an online provider) was liable if it “exercised editorial control over user-generated content hosted on” its site. This “decision raised the possibility that aggrieved parties could” successfully sue internet providers “if they moderated user content in any way.” Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996 (part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996) was expressly crafted to remove this liability. It reads in part: “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.” Without this determination, which effectively upended the impact of the 1995 court decision, “the internet would play a very different,” and probably “a much smaller role in our lives.” [Swaim] Consequently, internet providers have no legal liability arising from content posted by their users. This means, for example, that Amazon is not liable for unsafe or counterfeit products sold on its site by third parties, and that internet service providers are not responsible for the plight of people “who found themselves targeted or terrorized by mostly anonymous users.” [Swaim; Forman and Gallagher]

How would all of this have evolved in a stateless world? It is impossible to know because counterfactual history does not provide solid answers. It would be like trying to predict in 1905, how automobile and highway law would develop. What we do know is that technology often outpaces government law, and in such cases the participants themselves “create” their own rules by adopting common and customary practices. [Kinsella] To answer this more closely, we can look at “the development of photographic technology which provides a useful analogy to the development of computerized information collection technology.” [Fenrich, 1001] Just as we ask, “who owns the data collected by Facebook?” and “is our privacy invaded when Facebook uses that information for their own profit?” so people at the time asked: “who owns the photograph of you taken on a public street?” Or “who owns your phone conversation and who has a right to listen in?”

A 1902 case in the Court of Appeals of the State of New York (the state's highest court), though not involving a photograph but rather an artist's rendering, was brought against the Franklin Flour Mills. The mill ordered and circulated about 25,000 advertising pieces promoting Franklin Flour and containing (without permission) Abigail Roberson's likeness, which they

described as “Flour of the Family.” According to the complaint the sheets “were conspicuously posted and displayed,” and Abigail claimed she had been “greatly humiliated by the scoffs and jeers” of people who recognized her face and picture on the advertisement. [Spears, 1044] The Appeals Court dismissed the case because the majority of justices believed there was no precedent for the plaintiff's action, and that there was no right of privacy or right to be let alone. The court's majority, however, observed that the legislature could pass a law to provide that no one should be able to use the picture of another for advertising purposes without his or her consent. After a public uproar over the decision, the New York State Legislature enacted Section 50 and 51 of the state's Civil Rights Law. Under these sections “the use of a living person's 'name, portrait, or picture' for commercial purposes without prior written consent [became] a crime in New York.” [Spears, 1048]

This article is scary as hell. Like you, I have no solution to the problems bequeathed to us by information gathering. And I'm convinced there is no stopping it now, and probably nothing can be done to control it without equally deleterious unintended side-effects.

I fear we have come too far and turned over responsibility for our personal and national security to the state to an extent that can only be rectified by the abandonment of the state. Shrinking the state seems out of the question because of the many Americans calling for more and more government benefits. What is needed to turn the tide is widespread recognition that government is an always violent human construct, that violence is the singular problem facing mankind that causes people harm, and, further, that it is axiomatic that violence, whether initiatory or reflexive, always begets more violence. In other words, what is needed is education of the sort The Voluntaryist dispenses.

- Ned Netterville, editorial assistant to THE VOLUNTARYIST

This is one of the earliest legal cases trying to answer the question, “Who owns your face?” And by no means, is it a moot question today given the growth of facial recognition programs, which can now not only match your face to a name, but also recognize your mood, gait, hair, body type, and posture. For example, in 2015, the National Telecommunications and Information Association under the auspices of the US Department of Commerce held meetings with consumer advocates and the Big Four in an effort “to produce public guidelines on the creation and use of bio-metric information through a 'voluntary' stakeholder process.”

After weeks of negotiations, consumer advocates walked out in protest over the hard-line position of the tech companies and their lob-

byists on the single most pivotal issue: consent.

The companies insisted on their right to use facial-recognition systems to identify a 'stranger on the street' without first obtaining the individual's consent. As one lobbyist in the talks told the press, "Everyone has the right to take photographs in public ... if someone wants to apply facial recognition, should they really need to get consent in advance?" [Zuboff, 240]

Some privacy scholars disagreed, especially since the lobbyist did not address the issue of what was to be done with the information. It is now generally well established that consent must be given if your photo is to be used for commercial purposes. [Meyer] Otherwise under current law "if you can see it and you are on public property (e.g., on the road or sidewalk) then you have the right to photograph it. If you are on private property, such as in a store, shopping mall, sports arena or theater, then you need permission from the property owner to photograph." [Atkins]

"The individual who practices integrity is teachable, for by definition, he is a Truth seeker."
- Leonard E. Read

What does this snippet of history show us about how the law evolves? In a stateless world, people, and especially arbitrators, adjudicators, and insurance adjusters, would be very much concerned with consent and obviously with ownership of information. Information fiduciaries or intermediaries might be established to hold personal data subject to special restrictions, such as not commercializing or selling the data or disclosing it to third parties. (This would be similar to the attorney-client privilege, and to investment advisers, who have special fiduciary responsibilities to their clients.) [Schneier, 240-241] Bonding and surety companies would also have a specialized interest in accurate identification of people. [Watner, pp. 81-83] Insurance companies that provided liability coverage for internet providers would have to determine such questions as, "Who owns the property in question?" and "Are there privacy rights separate from property rights?" Would they agree with Murray Rothbard and others who have maintained that there are no special privacy rights, only property rights which are a prerequisite to privacy? [Block, 933-934; Rothbard, 121-122] One thing that makes personal information different from real estate and other tangible property is that it can be possessed by more than one person at a time. Since "it is not destroyed in the act of consumption" it "has certain similarities with intellectual property, in particular copyright." (For example, in Europe, personal information is viewed as a form of intellectual property, while in the US it stands outside the subject matter of copyright law.) [Bergelson, 436-437]

Meanwhile, the position of Google, Facebook,

Twitter, Amazon, Apple and other data-collecting agencies is that whatever information they "scoop up" they have homesteaded and thereby become its rightful owners. They fail to acknowledge that the individual consumer who "produces" this information ought to be entitled to claim initial ownership. "What can be more essential to an individual's sense of continuity of self over time than personal information – one's name, personal attributes, and the record of interest, preferences, past acts, and choices?" Personal information cannot exist without being attached to somebody, i.e., it comes into existence already owned. Contrary to the assumption of the data-collecting companies, this property is owned before they "grab" it because "everyone has an original property right in his or her personal information." [Bergelson, pp. 420-421, 431]

Google and other data-collecting organizations believe and act as though the default position is that they can pretty much do as they please with the information they collect. People who want to "opt out" of their operating plan are the exception. As Eric Schmidt of Google put it, "If you have something you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place." In other words, if you aren't doing anything wrong, then you should have nothing to hide. But these assertions are no justification for being watched. Practically every person wants some things kept private: what they eat, how long they sleep, what medical conditions they are being treated for, etc. Google, Facebook, and the others automatically assume you want everything about you being known, that you have nothing to hide. [Scheer, xii; Schneier, 147]

If we didn't know better, we would identify this policy of exercising total information control with government actors, and in fact, this is what has happened in China. The social-credit system developed by the Chinese government was implemented in 2014. Commentators have described it as "the most extensive program of government surveillance the world has ever seen," [Buckley] and "As the most ambitious experiment in social control in the world ... that will 'allow the trustworthy to roam everywhere under heaven, while making it hard for the discredited to take a single step.'" [China] One goal of the system is to have 600 million surveillance cameras operating by 2020. This is roughly one camera for every two Chinese citizens. "The cameras [will] feed government databases in real time and, with the assistance of sophisticated facial-recognition software," the Chinese government "expects to be able to identify everyone, everywhere, within three seconds of something happening." [Buckley]

"At the heart of the social-credit system is ... the 'judgment defaulter's list', composed of those who have defied a court order" or engaged in "untrustworthy behavior ... that has undermined or disrupted the social order," opposed the communist authorities, endangered

public security or the national defense. [“China”] “People with a low social-credit score are publicly shamed. Their internet speeds are reduced; they're denied good jobs and banned from air or train travel. Their children are kept out of prestigious schools, and even their pets can be taken from them. Once a defaulter is identified, the government has immediate access to his personal records at the push of a computer button.” “The ultimate goal is to create a wholly docile and submissive citizenry.” [Buckley] The system is somewhat unique in that it also “punishes and rewards companies for their corporate behavior,” [Kubota, “Businesses”] The social-credit system also encompasses car-tracking information, such as recording license plate numbers and color of vehicles. This is done by placing a radio frequency identification chip on the window of every new vehicle sold in China starting in 2019. “Reading devices installed along the roads will identify cars as they pass and transfer the data to the Ministry of Public Security.” [Kubota, “A Chip”]

What should be shocking in this description is not the story of the Chinese government's surveillance agenda, “but rather how similar it is to the path computer technology” is taking us in our own country. [Creemers] Thanks to computers, video cameras, sensors, credit cards, smart phones, our use of state identification cards and social security numbers, just about everything the normal person does “is mediated by computers that record and codify the details of our daily lives on a scale that would have been nearly unimaginable only a few years ago.” [Zuboff, 177] This kind of ubiquitous and surreptitious surveillance can only lead to a society “where people can become the subject of police investigations before they commit a crime.” In fact, some law enforcement agencies already use predictive analytic tools to help identify suspects and direct investigations. [Schneier, 116] Your life-time computer trail, including credit card purchases, magazine subscriptions, medical prescriptions, every web visit, every email, every bank deposit, your passport application, drivers' license information, judicial and divorce records, will yield total information awareness about every US citizen. [Scheer, 109] Eventually the computer will be used to drive your autonomous car, generate your income tax return, and pay your tax bill by debiting your bank account.

You could almost say that “you are being watched every second of every day.” [Staples, 98] Although video cameras and surveillance cameras are to be found in stores, workplaces, and banks, most surveillance takes place without our being aware of it. Reading a newspaper online, browsing an online store, searching for a book, making an electronic payment, carrying a smart phone and talking to a friend, all these things are being monitored, recorded, and the data is being stored forever.” [Schneier, 33, 38, 58] This is being done by both the American government and the American tech and data-gathering

companies. The assumption of both these groups is that we citizens need to be watched. The government assumes we are potential enemies and reverses the Constitution's assumption that it is our leaders that should be viewed with deep suspicion. Government agents have lied, grabbed for power, and been corrupted by the power they handle. [Scheer, xiv] However, private industry is not immune to lusting after power either. Their basic assumption is that the more information they have about us the better. “This data is collected not because the government agencies require it but because the companies themselves want to exploit it, for” their own profit. [Scheer, 97] The fact is that if these companies stopped collecting data about us, they might not be able to ensure the continuation of “their basic profit model.” [Scheer, 67]

When human beings are not threatened or coerced they act freely and thrive and make progress.
- Dave Scotese

If we look back at American history, we find that intelligence gathering has been an essential “function of Government since the founding of the Republic.” As early as 1790, Congress appropriated \$ 40,000 to fund covert operations.” [“The Evolution”] The advent of the computer has only strengthened this tendency, and the existence of private companies to collect data has only exacerbated it. Some would argue that so long as these private companies are providing a desired service to their customers in a transparently honest way they are an acceptable aspect of the modern world. “But it is another matter altogether when those private corporations are following the government's dictates,” and surrender this information to law enforcement authorities. [Scheer, 21] Why do people allow this data-gathering to exist? In some cases, it is because they don't realize it is happening. Or it might serve as an answer to fear-mongering government propaganda – fear of terrorists, fear of strangers abducting their children, fear of the drug dealers, fear of whatever bad guy is in vogue. [Schneier, 5] People in the United States have almost reached the point where they accept this totalitarian intrusion as part of the normal fabric of everyday life, and as something good for them. [Scheer, 177]

In an earlier article in THE VOLUNTARYIST, the computer was described as a double-edged sword. There is much truth in that description. “The same facial recognition technology that Disney uses in its theme parks to pick out photos its patrons might want to buy as souvenirs can identify political protesters in China.” [Schneier, 97] But the sword of the computer is actually dangerous on both edges. Do we trust the information gathering companies with our data? Do we trust the government with it? Changes in technology send up a red-flag warning. Who could have predicted that the advent of the automobile

would eventually generate government control over drivers' licenses, and that drivers' licenses would lead us down the road to a national identification card? Who can predict how computer technology will play out for the rest of this century? Already medical scientists are describing "a future in which a machine can scan your brain and migrate the essentials of your mind to a computer." This would enable scientists and doctors to preserve "a person's consciousness in a digital afterlife." [Graziano] What we do know is that the US government has had its hand in the creation of the computer and in the development of computer systems. "The unique technology of the computer enables it to be used not only to improve the quality of life and our standard of living, but as a very effective tool that can be used by government to oppress and terrorize us into submission." [Anonymous, 2] That means it is up to us, the large number of people who use computers, to decide what effect it will have over our lives and the lives of our children.

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We Are Many, They Are Few

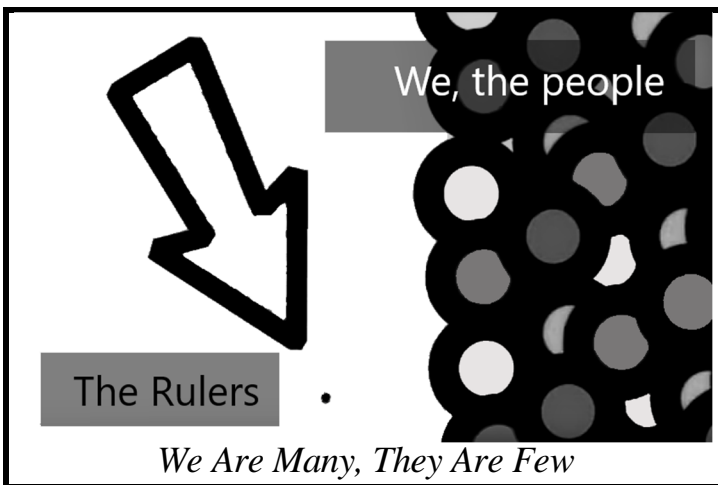
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That's why the throng obeys the dot. The throng really and truly believes that the dot has the divine right to rule the throng. All the excuses about constitutions, legislation, elections, appointments, and all the other political rituals: the entire purpose of that whole game is to keep up the illusion that the dot actually has the right to boss the throng around. And, conversely, that the members of the throng have a moral obligation to obey the dot. And that is why this ridiculous spectacle continues – why we have this huge throng obeying this tiny dot - giving it gigantic sums of money to do destructive, stupid, and evil things. The throng has been taught to believe that it is literally a sin to not give their money to the tiny little dot.

But almost everybody misses this. They look at the video and some of them say "We need to vote in a better dot. We need to petition the dot. We need the dot to change its commands." Or even "We need a revolution and go squash the dot." You don't need to squash the dot. Look at the stupid thing. Look how little it is. It doesn't matter. It only matters because the throng imagines that it has an obligation to obey the dot. Here is the point that many pro-freedom advocates completely miss. The problem is not the dot. It's

not its enforcers. All of the focus on the dot - with elections, and campaigning, and petitioning, and this and that other thing - all these people focusing on changing the dot, are completely missing the point. The dot isn't the problem.

What's between the ears of the people in the throng is the problem. You don't need an election. You don't need a revolution or need a new dot. You don't need anything. The dot would be ignored out of existence if the throng just realized we don't have any moral obligation to listen to it. We don't have to do what it says. We don't have to give it our money.



Now, of course, if one person realizes that, he's in deep trouble because, not only will the dot and its enforcers try to squish him, other members of the throng will try to squish him. And when people say "Well, we have the police and the military and the IRS. You know they have a bunch of enforcers?" Yeah, but the dot doesn't make them. The police, the tax collectors, they come from the throng. They, too, have been taught that the throng is under a moral obligation to obey this stupid tiny little parasitic dot and so they proudly go out and do their law enforcement which means some people in the throng force other people in the throng to obey the dot. And they feel righteous about it because they really and truly completely believe that it is evil to disobey the dumb little dot. It's evil not to give the stupid little dot a whole bunch of your money.

The rest of the throng says, by way of a jury, "Oh, you tax cheat!" You pick twelve Americans, they're going to say "You're evil. You didn't give your money to the dot. How dare you? Go to prison," because the throng believes in an obligation to obey the dot even though they don't like what the dot does with their money. They still feel a moral obligation to hand it over and that's the problem, their perception. It's not the dot. All of the power of the dot is illusion. The IRS agent that steals your bank account? He's suffering the same illusion that we all have a moral obligation to give our money to the dot. Even their enforcers only do what they do because of the delusion that the dot has the right to rule and we have the obligation to

obey. It's pathetic, this giant throng begging this little dot. In the video, it's funny to see the comparison, but most people have no idea why it happens. Why would this huge throng continually bow to this tiny little dot that's too small to see. Puny little thing, what power does it have? You don't even need to switch the thing. You don't need a revolution, you don't need to vote in a new dot. You don't need anything. Just ignore it. Any solution that focuses on doing something about the dot is absolutely doomed to fail because the dot is not the problem. In fact any solution that focuses on "Let's change the dot" somehow reinforces the notion that we have to obey the dot, so why bother changing it? Why bother putting in a new dot? Why not just ignore it? Because even most pro-freedom advocates along with everybody else believe that we have an obligation to obey the dot. Then our only recourse is the political process where we bicker with the dot, and try to meddle and tinker with it, instead of just saying "To heck with the dot. We don't need it, we don't have to obey it." Again, if one person does that, the rest of the throng squishes him.

If the throng as a whole, or even a significant minority of the throng realizes why are we obeying the stupid dot, we don't have to continue to do that. Game's over. The dot has no more power because all of its power is based on the illusion that what it does is legitimate. The bad news is, it's your belief system that is the direct cause of that ridiculous spectacle of a hundred million productive people throwing their wealth at these corrupt, lying crooks. You believe things, just as I believe things, that you were taught to believe all your life that are absolute lies. They're utterly insane. They don't make any sense if you actually examine the concepts around statism, government law, taxes, terminology that's made to dupe the throng into believing it has a moral obligation to obey the dot. And I believed them for a long, long time. I believed them and I never heard anyone question them. I don't think you're trying to ruin the world. I don't think you're trying to cause misery, suffering, economic collapse, and injustice. I don't know very many people who are trying to do that, but I know a lot of people who are doing it nonetheless because of their belief system, because of the way that their belief system drastically warps and perverts both their perceptions and their actions. If you look at the video "The Tiny Dot" and you think wow - that situation seems ridiculous - you have to understand why you, as part of the throng, are the problem. But you're also the solution and you don't need to fix the dot. You don't need to reform the politicians. You don't need legislation to change. You don't need a new election. Fix what's between your ears which may be a slow uncomfortable process. It was for me and just about everybody I know. Fix what's between your ears and the world will fix itself. ☑

We Are Many, They Are Few: The Tiny Dot Explained

By Larken Rose

[Editor's Note: This is a transcription of a video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVEzdh4PMDI> made by Larken Rose in October 2014, after he had made an earlier video titled "The Tiny Dot." As you read this, please keep in mind that "The Dot" is a small group of rulers, and that there is another dot of slightly more numerical enforcers. Larken focuses on the insight that people obey because they believe their rulers are legitimate. Much as the divine right of kings only lasted as long as people believed they had a divine right to rule, so will the divine right of governments to rule only last until their legitimacy disappears.]

Hi, I'm Larken Rose and I'm the one who made the video called "The Tiny Dot." If you haven't seen that video yet you can find that at [youtube.com/Larkenrose](https://www.youtube.com/Larkenrose). Now, "The Tiny Dot" video is very simple, almost to the point of being silly, but it demonstrates the difference between the number of people who are bossing us around and taking our money and the number of people who are continually handing over their money to Congress, to the people in Washington.

If you just see the statistical difference between this massive throng that's paying for these things and

the tiny little dot that's getting our money and then spending it, it's a ridiculous spectacle. If you just grasp the numbers involved, it's absurd. So I made this video to see how many people could actually explain how the heck we got into this situation.

Now a bunch of people wrote comments making wild guesses of what the problem is. It's that we're not paying attention to what the dot's doing, and that we have to vote for more respectable dots, and all these strange things, but none of them explain why you have this gigantic throng obeying a tiny little dot.

Finally somebody got the answer. He said "Well, it's not just the enforcers because the tiny little dot has their slightly bigger dot of enforcers. It's not just that the throng is scared of the enforcers, it's that the dot has the law on its side. That's it. It's not just a bunch of control freaks asking for money, it's the law. It's your 'fair share.' It's paying your taxes for the good of their country." All this propaganda and all this terminology is used by the dot to pretend that we have a moral obligation to fund it even if we don't like what it's doing. Even if we think it's destructive, and evil, and economically stupid, and anything else, they call their demands "taxes." They don't just say "Give us money or we'll hurt you," because the throng would say "No, you won't. Look how big we are. Look how little you are." They say "This is the law. You must pay your taxes," and people believe them.

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