



THE OTHER INFORMATION CITY

Not too many cities have the distinction of becoming words that are a part of language, and more often than not when this distinction is given to cities, it is generally as a pejorative. Thus, to be 'sent to Coventry' was an honour given only to criminals. The latest entry to the list of city words is Bangalore, and in the unofficial dictionary of the global information order, 'to be Bangalored' signifies the loss of one's job in the first world, through Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) to India or any other developing country.

Not content with its recent sobriquet, Bangalore however intends to transcend its Bangalore-ness, and instead aspires to be Singapore. Thus all the official self representation of Bangalore positions itself as the Singapore of India, and this metaphor is not only at the level of the symbolic, but also through the various joint ventures between the Government of Singapore and the Government of Karnataka, as well as between a number of large private companies in Singapore and Bangalore. It is also not surprising that the Master Plan for the proposed IT corridor, a massive plan to create a corridor covering 7,500 hectares of land has been prepared by Jurong, a Singaporean company.

There is little doubt that in the past ten years, Bangalore has attained almost a mythical status as the Silicon Valley

of India and emerged as one of the important nodes for the global flow of services, serving as the back end of many corporations across the world. Bangalore symbolises the emergence of India as an IT superpower, and has become a global city working in virtual time with the US in terms of the provision of IT enabled services. If dams were the most important symbols of post colonial India's entry into the modern, the IT industry would represent the most important symbol of India's entry into the global or into the new modernity marked by the pre-eminent position given to knowledge based services.

Bangalore now positions itself as the pre-eminent 'information city', the 'network city' and the 'Biotech' city, and has actively worked to shed its sleepy image as

the Garden City or Pensioners Paradise. Besides, with the kind of urbanization that one has seen in Bangalore in the past decade, the only gardens that one is likely to see are the software parks. The growth in the upwardly mobile professional class in Bangalore has also resulted in significant changes in the built up form of Bangalore. All the older architectural forms are flattened to allow for high-rise apartments, most of which are high walled and have their own security. The only non-rich who can even enter these places are the people who work as domestic workers, gardeners etc. Old media spaces such as

cinema halls are broken down to give rise to new shopping malls cum multiplexes, and the current pride of joy of Bangalore is a huge shopping mall called The Forum, boasting of a multiplex with Gold Class seats which cost Rs. 500 (€ 9,30) per head.

Unlike a city like Mumbai where the divide between the worlds of the urban elite and the urban poor is still tied together by railway lines and the sheer narrowness of the city, in Bangalore one can often forget the fact that there are more than 700 slums accounting for almost 40 % of the population. The relationship of these cities to their national location, which once made them hospitable sites for the poorer sections who came there in search of livelihoods, has now completely changed.

This urbanism in India has become a significant theatre of elite engagement with claims of globalization. Consumption, "information" society and the new economy, spatialised imprints of the media industry like multiplexes/malls, and lifestyle and suburbia go hand in hand with the cries of urban decay and pollution, and managing populations that are increasingly restless in the new arrangements.

Co-existing parallel with these spectacular global visions are also networks of local economies, always

lacking the infrastructural provisions and state backing unlike the IT companies, but equally mobile. This city weaves in its core the 'unorganized' and 'unplanned' growth of the city, both economically and spatially. It is here that the urban poor comprising a quarter of the city reside and carry out trade in conditions that make a decent living standard unattainable. While the older illegal city of slums and squatters has been in existence for a while, in the past ten years there has been another layer that has been integrated into the experience and narration of this illegal city. The proliferation of non-legal media practices ranges from pirated VCD's, DVD, MP3's to grey market mobile phones and pirate book sellers on the

streets informs the tactile practices and imagination of the illegal city. This is the other information city that exists, and it is certainly not unique to Bangalore.

The Media Market

Media Markets represent a fascinating aspect of the other information city. In cities like Delhi a large number of these spaces actually originate in the master plans of urban renewal where each of the markets are imagined as early non spaces much like many of the malls of today. But with the electronic revolution of the eighties, there is a massive transformation of these spaces, and today they are all seen as zones of IP wilder-

Bangalore symbolises the emergence of India as an IT superpower.

IP CITY EDITION INSIDE

In Bangalore one can often forget the fact that there are more than 700 slums accounting for 40 % of the population.

ನಾವು ಈಗ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಯುಗ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಅರ್ಥವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜೀವಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇವೆ ಎಂದು ಎಲ್ಲ ಪ್ರಚಲಿತ ಸಮಕಾಲೀನ ಹೇಳಿಕೆಗಳು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಭೃಂಗಲೂರಿನಂತಹ ಜಾಗತಿಕ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ನಗರದ ಮಟ್ಟಿಗಂತು ಈ ಮಾತು ಅಕ್ಷರಶಃ ಸತ್ಯ. ಆದರೆ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ರಾಜಕೀಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಾವೆಷ್ಟು ಕಾಳಜಿ ಹೊಂದಿದ್ದೇವೆ? ಮಾಹಿತಿಯ ಹಕ್ಕುಸ್ವಾಮ್ಯ ಯಾರಲ್ಲಿದೆ, ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಯಾರಿಗೆ ಲಭ್ಯ, ಮಾಹಿತಿಯ ಯಜಮಾನನಿಯ ಚೌಕಟ್ಟಿನಿಂದಾಗಿ ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಚಾರಧಾರೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸೃಜನಶೀಲತೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಯಾವ ರೀತಿಯ ತೊಡಕುಗಳಾಗಿವೆ - ಈ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ನಾವು ಕೇಳಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ. ಸಮಕಾಲೀನ ನಗರಜೀವನದ ಅನುಭವಗಳಿಂದಾಗಿ ಆಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ನಮಗೆ ಆಸಕ್ತಿ ಇದೆ (ಅತಿಶ್ರಮಂತರಿಗಾಗಿ ತಯಾರಾದ ಮಲ್ಟಿಪ್ಲೆಕ್ಸ್ ಗಳ ಉದಯ, ಅದೇ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಅತಿಯಾದ ಕೃತಿಚೌರ್ಯ). ಬೇಹುಗಾರಿಕಾ ತಂತ್ರಜ್ಞಾನಗಳ ಅತಿಯಾದ ಬಳಕೆಯಿಂದಾಗಿ ನಾವು ನಮ್ಮ ದೈನಂದಿನ ಗೋಪ್ಯತೆಯನ್ನು ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಜಾಗತಿಕ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ನಗರ ಯೋಜನೆಯು ಈ ಎಲ್ಲ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಒಂದೆಡೆ ಸೇರಿಸಿ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಸಮಾಜವನ್ನು ಸರಿಯಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಥೈಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ.



WORLD-INFORMATION EXHIBITION

The staging of Bangalore as a node through which we can explore various sites of information politics offers multiple possibilities. The project is designed to harness the collaborative energies of various disciplines, including artists, media practitioners, software programmers, urbanists, and designers amongst others to investigate the idea of the world information city.

While contending with the city as an information city is a part of this challenge, contesting the claim that it is only a global city and is not continuously being informed by the past is an equally important aspect of the exhibition.

How can we reflect on these contradictory aspects of our cities and produce multiple narratives and contingent ways of looking at reality, so as not to become locked into simple dichotomies between the corporate solutions and activist reactions?

The exhibition is a dispersed show across different sites from Russell Market in Shivajinagar through Tasker Town to Cunningham Road. It is designed in such a way to facilitate site-specific works, but also to allow for interaction with different publics. The exhibition is also stretched between these three points in the city (Russell Market, Cunningham Road, Cubbon Park) so that the experiences, sights,

ness where piracy and illegality are rampant. In Bangalore, the names of the various markets also signal to interesting networks of globality and desire, which are very different from the global aspirations of the elite. The main media markets in Bangalore include 'Burma Bazaar', 'Honk Kong Bazaar', 'Singapore Bazaar' and 'National Market', speaking to interesting sets of connections. Since most of the grey market electronic products usually originated from South East Asia before being indigenized and produced in India. In recent times, the rumors of the Chinese take over have been the more interesting phenomenon and the promise of cheaper electronic goods has sparked off a new series of make-shift bazaars which all call themselves, rather generically, "China bazaars" selling everything from cheap locks, emergency lights, toy cars to DVD players.

A number of these media markets are also what enables the creation of a market for the legal producers of content. Much before the official entry of players like Magnasound in India, the appetite for sixties rock was met and created through places like Free School street in Calcutta. Most of the cassettes came from south east Asia even then, and it is interesting that there were classifications of originals and copies even within the grey market. Thus a cassette which had been smuggled into India from south east Asia would be an original, while a copy of it made in India would qualify as a pirated copy, even though technically they were both pirated copies. A number of the media markets in Bangalore served as spaces where one could get compilations re-

corded in the eighties and early nineties. These compilations were highly prized amongst music lovers, and intricate systems of sharing and peer to peer distribution were in place, both for the sharing of information on which music was available where, as well as the music itself. Most of these cheap cassette stores ran without any legal problem since copyright had not been as big an issue then as it is now.

At the level of the everyday, the old prohibition and regulation on the social life of commodities have proved ineffective, urban residents are now assaulted with a deluge of cultural products, cassettes, CDs, MP3s, VCDs, cable television, grey market computers, cheap Chinese audio and video players, thousands of cheap print flyers, and signage everywhere. What is remarkable here is that the preponderance of these products comes from the grey or informal sector, outside the effective regulation of the state or large capital.

India today has the world's second largest music market, a large film industry with global dreams, a majority grey computer market, hundreds of thousands of tiny phone and word processing shops and cyber cafés. And as if from the ruins of urban planning new media bazaars, which supply these networks, have emerged existing in the cusp of legality and non-legality. Everyday a guerrilla war is raging, between new intellectual property raiders, the police and unceasing neighborhood demand for grey ware. At the heart of

this extension of the visible has been the production of media commodities outside the legal property regimes of globalization.

Copy culture and non-legal distribution networks have been central to the spread of the media, in a way that distinctions between the technological and cultural seem blurred in daily life. A significant section of the urban population derives their media from these networks. Using the tactics of the fragmentary city, the pirate networks have frustrated every effort of the proprietary enforcement regime to control them.

However with the increased visibility of these media spaces and the special attention paid to them by copyright enforcers, in recent times there has been a shift from centralized markets that served as the main distribution areas for non legal media commodities to more fragmented and decentralized neighborhood spaces where media commodities are available. Just as in the eighties the audio cassette moved the idea of the media commodity from the showroom to the market, there is a similar move where the non legal media commodity is moving from specialized spaces to the more quotidian and banal market spaces competing with vegetables, household goods etc. In cities like Mumbai one sees a number of these media commodity sellers sharing spaces outside railways stations with other hawkers.

For those who are less interested in the

question of legality v. illegality, and assuming that we don't have to go through the exercise of detoxifying the usual accounts of piracy, there is a wider range of interesting issues that can arise in this other information city from questions around the production networks, the distribution nodes, the question of livelihood, forms of circulation. As a cinephile, I am particularly fascinated in the changing dynamics of the aesthetics even within the pirate markets, there is an entire world of film for instance that has opened out in Bangalore as a result of the circulation of non Hollywood foreign films, independent films, documentaries, experimental films. I am interested in the question of how in a country like India where censorship still prevails severely for cinema, the grey market emerges as the domain in which free speech can circulate without restriction. If on the one hand there is a shrinking of older cinematic spaces (the recent closure of Plaza, Bangalore's oldest theatre to make way for a mall), there is also at the same time a massive expansion of new media spaces which do not have the same claims upon a public as older media forms did.

Once we remove our legal lens, the possibilities of the other information city are endless.

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For the full text of this essay, please check <http://world-information.org/downloads/liang.pdf>

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sounds and smells along the way are part of the show, and is simultaneously being informed and broadened by the media and art projects. Rather than taking away the public from the city into a white cube gallery space, the exhibition seeks to situate the works in the city. We would also like the exhibition to act as a space for initiating future dialogue on issues of information politics from various avenues of practices and disciplines. Some of the questions/themes addressed by the exhibition are the following

- What does it mean to speak of a World Information City? What are the conditions and possibilities through which a city positions itself vis-à-vis the global through its relationship to technology and information?
- How do the official narratives of the information city reconcile with other kinds of claims to the city? How does this official image relate to the other information city, marked by non-legal media flows, fuzzy spaces of media circulation such as cyber cafes, pirate media markets?
- How does the idea of thinking through specific conceptual terms such as the World-

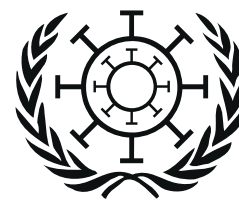
Information City enable us to think about some of the larger contemporary questions around globalization?

- What happens when questions of identity, performance and labor merge, as in the case of call center workers? How do we look at the peculiar experience of the city of 'sleep workers'?
- What are the kinds of conflicts taking place in the designing of the world information city, and in reshaping it around impossible visions of Singapore, Shanghai or London?
- Are there ways to examine the similarities and disjunctures between the nature, architecture, and design of information politics and their relation to the architecture and design of the city? Can, for instance, the metaphor of the enclosures be used as much to understand digital processes as also to the built up form of the city?
- How do new information technologies reshape the very idea of the city, of planning and of design?

Namita Malhotra
Alternative Law Forum

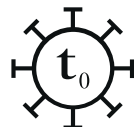
WORLD-INFORMATION.ORG

World-Information.Org was initiated by the Institute for New Culture Technologies / t0, Vienna and has a wide range of international experts, theoreticians and practitioners in its advisory board. Since the launch of the project under the patronage of UNESCO as a main theme of the European Cultural Capital 2000 in Brussels, World-Information.Org staged its extensive exhibition and conference program in Vienna, Amsterdam, Belgrade, and Novi Sad and presented at various European cities like London, Berlin, Munich and Helsinki.



Who owns the Internet? How does it really work? In what ways do new technologies transform society? What is the impact of these technologies on daily life, work, culture and politics? How is public opinion created? How do new information technologies reshape the very idea of the city? These are some of the important question that will be debated at "World-Information City", World-Information.Org's Bangalore program.

"World-Information City" is a joint effort of European and South Asian civil society a global cooperation rooted in the diversity of Bangalore's Information Society projects and realized in collaboration with Alternative Law Forum and Mahiti, Bangalore, as well as Sarai, Delhi, and Waag Society, Amsterdam. "World-Information City" focuses on cultures of Open Networks in technology driven information societies and on issues of Intellectual Property and access to information.



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WORLD-INFORMATION CITY PROGRAM

BANGALORE, NOVEMBER 14 – 20, 2005

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SCHEDULE

SUNDAY 13	OPENING CAMPAIGN PROJECTS
MONDAY 14	OPENING EXHIBITIONS GUIDED TOURS THROUGH THE EXHIBITION LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK
TUESDAY 15	SPECIAL GUIDED TOURS
WEDNESDAY 16	
THURSDAY 17	CONFERENCE
FRIDAY 18	
SATURDAY 19	FINAL EVENT/ELECTRONIC MUSIC/PERFORMANCES
	WORKSHOPS OPEN MUSIC AND CONFERENCE-RELATED WORKSHOPS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

WORLD-INFORMATION CITY CONFERENCE 17 – 20 November 2005

The World-Information City conference in Bangalore 2005 will bring together renowned European and South-Asian researchers on issues of information economies and Intellectual Property Regimes related to the social dynamic of emerging global information cities. The conference will look into how the city is affected by Information and Communication Technologies and the rise of electronic surveillance and control.

Mapping interrelations of global information landscapes and urban transformations, of immaterial regimes and social realities, it highlights conflicts over the dominion on knowledge, the implications of new information regimes on knowledge and culture production and the zoning of the information city.

Questioning the obsession over intellectual property rights and the new limitations imposed on digital information exchange, it explores arguments for the "Information Commons", a democratically regulated information space with public accountability. This requires a vibrant culture of "Open Source", based on a plurality of agents in the information landscape and the heterogeneity of collaborative cultural practices.

The two day conference addresses social and political questions related to neo-medievalism and information feudalism, as well as semiotic democracy and the psychological and structural qualities of urban development reflected in urban zoning and the rise of city states.

With several hundred participants expected to take part in the event, live streaming will enable an even wider international audience to follow the conference proceedings.

Confirmed speakers include **David Lyon** (CDN), **Franco "Bifo" Berardi** (IT), **Ravi Sundaram** (IN) as well as other distinguished scholars and activist from Europe and India.

Conference Editors: **Konrad Becker**, **Lawrence Liang**
Conference Co-Editor: **Shuddhabrata Sengupta**

EVENTS

- **PD-Network-Jam**
Sound workshops results (participants)
- **Alpine Drone Scapes**
TronStoner
- **Fables of reconstruction**
dbase
- **For four for loops and four loops**
Christoph Kummerer
- **Thought Thieves** presentation of Winner projects
Thought Thieves is a short film showcase about corporate appropriation of knowledge, culture, and creativity. It is a grassroots response to the Micro\$oft propaganda competition of the same name. www.thought-thieves.org

WORKSHOPS

- **Economy of the commons**
Felix Stalder
- **Open sound workshops**
Full disclosure and digital art – why programming matters
Chris Kummerer
- **Interactive digital audio workshop**
Ralf Traunsteiner and Wolfie Christ
- **FOSS**
Mahiti
- **Writing on the surface of the city**
Student broadsheet workshop by ALF and Sarai
- **Electronic media monitoring**
Marko Peljhan

WORLD-INFORMATION CITY CAMPAIGN

The World-Information City Campaign aims to raise awareness on issues of the information society in the public sphere and will introduce these themes into the urban environment of Bangalore. Various media interventions will be located in different parts of the city. Along with billboards, posters, stickers and traditional Indian media forms like cut-outs, banners over streets and wall paintings, monitors and digital displays will present key messages.

Projects presented include:

- **Delinquents**
Ulrike Brückner
- **Good questions**
Sebastian Luetgert
- **Drawings**
Elfriede
- **You are free**
Paula Roush
- **Who owns your knowledge?**
Dominik Hruza
- **United We Stand**
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WORLD-INFORMATION CITY EXHIBITION 14 – 20 November 2005

WORLD-INFOSTRUCTURE

World-Infostructure visualizes subject matter linked to various aspects of the information society based on research by World-Information.Org on global communication networks, the global media market, global content channels, global brain ware, global data bodies, global info rights and digital security. Numerous information displays illustrate issues associated with the development of digital media, new communication tools, and sophisticated technical instruments e.g. the increasing use of biometric devices. Special displays will be developed relating to local issues of the World-Information City Bangalore

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Exhibition Curators: **Namita Malhotra**, **Ayisha Abraham**, **Kiran Subbaiah**

ART/MEDIA WORKS

- **Electricity as network**
Ashok Sukumaran
- **On voice culture and automatism**
Naveen
- **Down the road**
Sheela Gowda
- **World Info City TV**
Shaina Anand
- **Cinematographic act, comics**
ALF
- **Age/sex/location**
Raqs Media Collective
- **No_Des**
Raqs Media Collective
- **Straight 8 - Film Tales Part I**
Ayisha Abraham (film screening)
- **Dancing on glass**
Ram Ganesh (play)
- **Untempered – a soundscape installation**
Rajivan Ayyappan
- **Synchronizations 2**
Priyanka Dilip, Divya Viswanathan, Nishita Kavadia, Umang Bhattacharyya, Michael Coburn (Srishti School of Arts)
- **Melrose, Bangalore**
Christoph Schäfer (sponsored by Max Mueller Bhavan Bangalore)
- **Makrolab – Electronic Media Monitoring**
Marko Peljhan
- **The square and the round god – an idea for a universal trajectory (in the manner of a proposal for 12 German pop songs)**
Hilary Koob-Sassen

GUIDED TOURS

- **Cities within Cities: Landscapes of Hydras and the Global Ideal**
Solomon Benjamin
- **Village-Radio Project Number 20**
Ashish Sen (VOICES, www.voicesforall.org)



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<http://world-information.org>