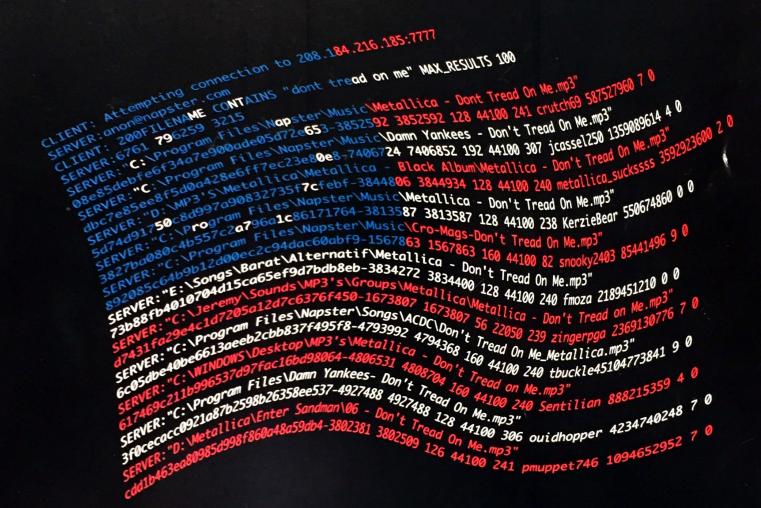
DOCTOBER 2000 BURN THIS



RANTS & RAVES



"Like a Taxi for Your Mind," by J. J. Clift.









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See page 317 for rules.

It's ludicrous to say that HavenCo CTO Ryan Lackey's "big concept" is that "freedom is the next killer app." Sealand is the antithesis of true freedom. It has the same charter as every garden-variety third-world dictatorship: The leaders make up the laws to suit themselves. As usual, this antidemocracy is wrapped in feelgood lingo about independence and empowerment so the masses er, clients – won't notice that they are nothing but passive participants in the dictator's power fantasies.

Sealand, with its explicit antiauthority posture, is actually about as authoritarian as they come. Kim Allen kjas@mindspring.com

Beta Haven

I pray that the brave men and women of Sealand ("Welcome to Sealand. Now Bugger Off." Wired 8.07, page 230) will build a Napster and give the world free music forever. Nobody can stop them. Will we be so lucky?

Eric Jacobson jacobson2@prodigy.net

Along with all the advantages of being off-government, HavenCo and the Principality of Sealand may discover some disadvantages. Providing their own laws, police, and national security may not be as easy as they think.

Let's assume they become as rich as they imagine. One of the citizens might decide to confiscate more than their share of the profits. Who would enforce HavenCo's internal agreements? The company couldn't bring their case to a British court. What if some of the staff staged a coup — where would the royal family turn? If a foreign nation tried to conquer Sealand, the British would probably intercede. But would the British lift a finger if a boatload of Bristol ruffians occupied Sealand by force?

John Pankowicz john-pankowicz@home.com

I commend the action of the Sealand/ HavenCo patriots. They have taken sovereignty to another level. If the physical nations shut them down — which is likely — it will only prove that these nations talk of freedom but don't mean it. But if HavenCo succeeds, we will see a dotcom stampede to buy or lease space on offshore oil rigs and the like. HavenCo will reveal the obsolescence of the socialist nation-state.

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