

# The Real Matrix: New Normal Edition



By Steven Yates

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## **The Internet: Yesterday's Information Gold Mine, Today's Dystopia.**

An article series I did some years ago entitled “The Real Matrix” (late in 2004) became the most popular item in my archive (it's still [here](#)). It garnered hundreds of emails and two all-expenses-paid invites to speak at national meetings. It still received favorable emails *years* later.

I tried to continue the series about ten years ago, but for reasons that escape me now, it never got finished. It was going to culminate with an account of how we no longer live and work in a capitalist economy (given a standard understanding of that term) but a *technofeudalist* one, beyond the merging of state and corporate power that was Mussolini's conception of fascism. I penned and had posted an independent essay on technofeudalism and its structure back in 2015, but it disappeared under mysterious circumstances. The link now redirects to an Indonesian gambling site.

For a time I wanted to refurbish that essay, but Yanis Varoufakis [beat me to it!](#) As Greece's one-time finance minister, he has a considerably larger audience than I do, anyway.

Some time ago, a reader queried me about refurbishing “The

Real Matrix.” I gave the matter thought, especially post-plan-demic.

The verdict?

No.

Why not?

I hope you’ll bear with me. This is going to take some time.

For starters, we’re in a totally different environment now from when I wrote the original. It’s a different Internet. Much larger, more all-pervasive, more integrated into everything than it was in 2004.

And totally commodified. When the Internet first became publicly accessible, it was ad free. As Varoufakis explains in *Technofeudalism: What Killed Capitalism*, it was designed (in the bowels of DARPA) as a vehicle for “communication” between military computers, not for commercial purposes. Then, in the late 1990s, Jeff Bezos asked, “What can I sell over the Internet?” His first answer, we know, was books. Amazon thus became the first online bookstore. Now it sells nearly everything and has put thousands of brick and mortar endeavors out of business. Bezos’s corporation was among those who reaped windfalls from the plan-demic. His net worth skyrocketed to well over \$100 billion!

Fast-forward to the online world of 2024.

You’re as hammered with ads as if you were watching TV. If I can be bothered to check my Facebook feed, it’s over 60 percent ads. I cannot watch a YouTube (owned by Google) video without constant interruptions. Options to click off the ads are disappearing.

You can, of course, give the billionaire owners money with a paid account and make the ads go away. That’s the point. Interruptions are corporate “nudges.”

It's a commonplace now: if you have free accounts anywhere – and most social media accounts can be set up for free – *you're not the customer*. Big Tech's *customers* are those paying big bucks to advertise.

*You're the product*: your attention, incentivized; your clicks; your online footprint. Marketed and sold, based on what algorithms “say” you like.

Sites like LinkedIn have become jokes: “entrepreneurial” wannabes trying to sell services to one another, paying something like \$59 a month (*first month a freebie!*) to search for “connections” on levels non-paying users cannot access. (Yes, I was one till I wised up.)

If you're not participating in this circus, Internet marketing “gurus” have plenty of means of guilt-tripping you. You're losing out! You're being bypassed! You're a *broken human*, and we can *fix* you. Just buy my program. Only \$499, discounted to \$249 if you *act now!*

LinkedIn is a billionaire corporation, goes without saying.

Whatever the billionaire class touches, it turns into one more cash cow, often at the expense of *our* time, money, and peace of mind.

It's not just the billionaire class. More and more content is disappearing behind paywalls as we move to a paid-subscription economy. Do *writers* struggling to survive have a choice? I do not know how long I can keep *Navigating the New Normal* going without going entirely paid! I do not know how much longer I can keep sending material to *NewsWithViews.com* for free!

I've encountered many writing “gurus.” Some claim to be earning \$10,000s/mo. blogging. I've never seen a tax return, however, and since they're all selling programs on how to make money blogging, or with online newsletters, I suspect they're earning more *selling programs* than they are *writing*. I could

be wrong, of course. Show me a breakdown on what was earned doing what, alongside that tax return, and I'll recant.

Lastly, in this techno-dystopia, don't even think of trying to get a person by phone at a corporation! As technology has replaced human beings in waves, *customer service* is a thing of the past. It's *magnitudes* worse since the plan-demic. Have a problem? Can't figure out how something works on a website? Google it, and good luck! Having trouble just logging in? Don't have a phone or number that can receive an authentication code by text now that everything's gone to two-step authentication (to protect your account, of course)?

If you're not given an email option, then again, good luck figuring out what to do!

I was once able to get through to a person at Hewlett-Packard, trying to troubleshoot a printer problem. Instead of helping me resolve my problem, the person tried to sell me a subscription to their technical support services! Only \$25/mo., for something I needed once, and might never need again! I turned them down flat! My wife's nephew is an engineer. He came in and fixed the problem for free!

How long will it be before the subscription economy spreads from the Internet to *everything*?!

Think of basic kitchen appliances. If a microwave oven sells for, let's say, \$195, and the corporation can instead sell you a *subscription* (incentivized by *free servicing* again assuming you can reach a human being) for, say, \$25.95/mo. instead, then if the microwave lasts for three years the corporation has made \$934.20 per oven, not \$195; and if it's sold just 1,000 microwave ovens on this subscription model, that's almost a million dollars as opposed to just \$195,000!

In the future you'll own nothing, have no privacy, and be happy (and eat bugs)! Remember?

If you're wondering what any of this has to do with updating "The Real Matrix," please do keep reading.

### **"Why Nobody Sees My Stuff": A Short Guide to Overproduction.**

In our developing technofeudalist dystopia, we've seen a massive *overproduction* of content, including commentary. This continues daily. Multiple feeds come my way each morning. Email is now a burden. Folks in my network send me their latest pieces, or links to still more material. If the person is a friend, I try to at least skim it to get the gist of it. But reading more than a tiny fraction of what comes into my inbox each day is impossible. Nothing else would get done.

So, I get it: *information overload* explains, at least in part, why few of my *own* recent pieces have generated much interest: are doing well to garner 100 hits (on Substack, anyway, where I can see the analytics).

My audience seemed to diminish in size during the 2010s. During the 2020s it has plummeted.

No more speaking invites. Two radio interviews in the past five years. Same host.

I've never sought celebrityhood. I don't think of myself as an "influencer," and I don't have tens of thousands of "followers" on X (formerly Twitter). I'm an introvert, and not good at self-promotion. And if you want to know the truth, I've come to *detest* most social media. Given its addictive and divisive tendencies, it's clearly done more harm than good. It worries me that an entire generation has grown up following "influencers" on Instagram and now TikTok, playing violent videogames, watching porn, etc., thinking that what they're seeing and hearing is reality.

What worries me *more* is that if *you're* not spending hours on X (formerly Twitter), or Instagram, or TikTok, making videos, posting, commenting, "building your brand" (your online

identity which is almost certainly a fantasy), you're invisible.

The Internet was becoming an information gold mine in 2004. Nothing like it had ever existed before. Anyone could research anything, and they did! They could write about it and easily gain an audience!

In 2024, it's become a digital prison.

Rather like *The Matrix*, a prison for our minds.

Something you can no longer live a normal life without. Same with smartphones.

Much of it is *fantasy*, the product of business models designed to capture and hold our attention ("built to keep us under control," Morpheus says), so that its billionaire owners, the equivalent of the feudal lords of centuries ago, can get even richer by adding advertising to our content while incentivizing us to produce more of it.

It's also well-known: users see what the algorithms show them. Sometimes this reflects their history on the site, sometimes not.

If you're relying on these platforms "to get the word out" and are not supporting *official narratives*, again (unless you have really good contacts out in the *real world*) you can forget about visibility.

It's called *shadow-banning*.

Algorithmic censorship started during the Obama years but kicked in seriously with the Trump upset in 2016. By that time, of course, the Internet was controlled by corporate overlords. Google was, and still is, atop that list. Google's remains the dominant search engine. No one else's is even close to it.

Email? I know of content creators and writing “gurus” who sing email’s praises. They make the reasonable point that if you can build a list of tens of thousands of email addresses (*hundreds* of thousands is better yet!) you can reach your audience directly without depending on *any* social media platforms. (Don’t forget to include your offer!)

They’re probably right about that. But this doesn’t address the larger picture: the massive overproduction of content and the time-crunch it creates for readers who (one hopes!) have lives away from screens.

Of what shows up in my inbox these days, probably around five percent gets opened.

Over half of my email is some “guru” trying to sell me something.

*Newsflash*, therefore: hitting *send* doesn’t get your email read. Not without just the right headline, sent at just the right time, and there are “gurus” who will sell you gimmicky courses *just on email headline writing!* For as is also well known in the trade, “spammy” headlines aren’t seen at all. Email, too, is at the mercy of the “gatekeeper” filters of the host system (Yahoo, Gmail, etc.) that will *automatically* nuke your email to the spam folder.

So what do you do in this environment if you’re not famous?

No refurbishing of anything, as if you were. Not enough people will see it to make the project worth doing.

**The “Real Matrix” is shattered.**

All this aside...

***IF THE TENS OF MILLIONS OF POTENTIAL READERS OUT THERE WEREN’T AWAKENED BY THE EVENTS OF MARCH 2020 THROUGH LATE 2022, NOT REALIZING THEY WERE LIVING THROUGH THE BIGGEST POWER GRAB IN HUMAN HISTORY, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO HELP THEM!!!***

*Those who can't see what's gone on since, e.g., with the lawfare attacks on Trump – or see through “legacy” (corporate) media's litany of weaponized phrases (misinformation, threat to democracy, conspiracy theory, far right, Russian propaganda, extremist, racist, neo-Nazi, white supremacy, false equivalence, misogyny, toxic masculinity, homophobic, transphobic, antivaxxer, antisemitism, etc., etc., etc.), I'd have no clue what to do for them if I was an “influencer,” or had that huge email list and genius headlines “begging” to be opened!*

The “Matrix” is shattered! *Unplugged*, if you prefer!

You shouldn't need to be “red pillled” to see that you're being lied to 24/7 by nearly all corporate media! That there are only a few truth-tellers left you can trust to at least *try* to get things right (and God knows we're far from omnipotent; but very few of us can afford a staff of researchers and fact-checkers; so we *don't* always succeed!).

*Sometimes the truth isn't even hidden from you.*

Consider [Event 201](#) that predated the arrival of the (almost certainly lab-enhanced) coronavirus. That was October 18-19, 2019, and featured a “tabletop” exercise version of what was unleashed on the world a few months later.

As you can see if you just click the link, *it's still not hidden!* It's plain as day, right on the World Economic Forum's own website.

Not a “conspiracy site.”

It's true, such exercises weren't splashed across newspapers or placed “above the fold” on websites.

The power brokers knew then, and know now, that mass audiences remain more interested in sports, celebrities, and porn. So, they don't bother to hide.



As I've explained previously, obsessing over politics and power is not on most people's plates. Their priorities are their own relationships, work and personal goals, financial concerns, health concerns, children if they have them, involvement with their communities in some cases, and whatever else affects them directly or what they can affect. Their personal lives and immediate problems are understandably at the center of their attention.

This is normal.

But in a world controlled by the Global Wolf (go [here](#), scroll to Sec. 8), *normal* works against them.

### **The Global Wolf: What He Wants.**

We need *sheepdogs* in the sense I discussed in Pt 2 of "Conservatism." Obviously, as Dave Grossman observed, *someone* needs to confront the dangerous sociopaths in our midst: the *wolves*. Research tells us that roughly 4 percent of the general population has sociopathic tendencies.

This is why no form of purely voluntarist anarchism, or even totally "free market" libertarianism, is going to work on any large scale.

Remember: you can't be nice to the wolf. He doesn't respond to 'nice'; it's not in his makeup. It is *dangerous* to try and trade with him, work for him, or employ him, because these all presuppose trust, and trust presupposes honesty. The wolf doesn't play by such rules. He makes it up as he goes along, to gain whatever he seeks, be it money, power, murder and mayhem, or just someone to use for sex. If the wolf has an identifiable rule, it's the old saw that the ends justify the means. Or perhaps: "If I want something, I have a 'right' to it. If I want to do something, I have a 'right' to do it." If you're nice to him and assume he'll leave you alone if you leave him alone, he'll take advantage of your naivete and go right on being a wolf.

A major reason I stopped being a Libertarian was that I saw in it no machinery able to control the wolves. Especially the intelligent ones, able to act "virtuous" until they are positioned where they want to be. Then they do as they please, destroying trust, and your society crumbles.

What about confronting the Global Wolf? That's much harder! The Global Wolf has all the above coupled with organization and resources most of us cannot even imagine!

Confront him directly? How does one even do that?

Think about what I was saying about just trying to get someone at a corporation on the telephone (this applies to government agencies in spades as well).

One is in the position of trying to deal with a vast, amorphous *blob* (author [James Howard Kunstler](#) even calls it that). Like the mythical Hydra, if you're somehow able to cut off one head, two more appear. Dealing with one of its appendages will leave the rest untouched, and a good bit of it is invisible.

Any viable action steps have to start with fierce dedication to the truth, and to getting cognitively, psychologically, and economically as independent and self-sufficient as possible. If you're trading time and effort for a paycheck (which describes over 90 percent of work in industrial civilization), you can't do it.

Writers trying their damndest to expose lies and wake people up need to think of themselves as *Sheepdogs* of a different sort (note the upper-case): *language police* in a higher sense of that term than it's typically used for, standing guard on the walls of information, exposing propaganda, weaponized words and phrases, and bald-faced lies.

Neither type of sheepdog is popular. As Grossman observes, the former looks a lot like the wolf and is just as capable of

violence as the wolf. For purposes of protection and sometimes punishment, not predation.

Both small-scale wolves and the Global Wolf are predators. But they don't want the same thing. The Global Wolf isn't looking for someone to use for sex. He has much bigger prey in mind.

### **What is to be done?**

If you write, carry the truth forward, however and wherever possible.

Or undertake another project the goal of which is independence and self-sufficiency. We must work to extricate ourselves from dependence on systems and institutions the Global Wolf controls, which is most of them.

Continue to remind yourself that whatever the immediate future holds, the Global Wolf's days are numbered.

Why?

Because even if God doesn't step in and clean up this mess in a big way in the near future, what the Global Wolf wants is an empire.

Not merely the U.S. empire. He likes the U.S. war machine, but he's after bigger game.

He wants *world government* ("global governance"), formal or not, able to serve his vast network of global corporations ensuring control over all resources and endeavors: energy, finance, land, water, trade, infrastructure, food, health, education, information, science, technology, weaponry. He wants all us peasants in positions of submission and subservience, *voluntarily* if possible, *accepting* this as our lot in life.

A world in which you own nothing (everything you use is by subscription), have no privacy (your smartphone knows where

you are even if you turn it off), but will be happy even if you're forced to eat bugs.

What the Global Wolf *doesn't* want is anything as potentially disruptive as an informed, self-sufficient, and willfully independent middle class.

But ...

***EMPIRES ALWAYS DISINTEGRATE!*** *They eventually choke on their own corruption. They cannibalize themselves and fall from within. Always.*

That's freedom's ace-in-the-hole!

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A slightly different version of this article is available on [Navigating the New Normal, on Substack](#). Please consider subscribing. It's still free (for now).

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Steven Yates's book *Four Cardinal Errors: Reasons for the Decline of the American Republic* (2011) can be ordered [here](#).

His philosophical work *What Should Philosophy Do? A Theory* (2021) can be obtained [here](#) or [here](#).

His paranormal horror novel *The Shadow Over Sarnath* (2023) can be gotten [here](#).

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