



Future histories of Detroit will include the long unacknowledged and almost secret influence on Techno of a Detroit-based French Canadian computer scientist named Richard T. Gagnon.

In 1970, working in the basement of his home, Gagnon developed a prototype speech synthesizer using a phoneme-generator based on recordings of his own voice. In 1972, backed by Michigan auto industry money and working under the company name Votrax International, Gagnon released the world's first commercially available synthetic speech engine, the Votrax VS4. An early customer was a German musician named Florian Schneider, who visited Gagnon in 1974 while Kraftwerk were touring the US with their breakthrough record *Autobahn*. Schneider bought the current Votrax upgrade, a VS6; establishing it as part of Kraftwerk's sound on the following record, *RadioActivity*, in 1975, and all of the group's subsequent records.

Schneider in fact used a vocoder to filter the actual sound of the Votrax chip. Kraftwerk were anyway known to operate under a code of secrecy, and neither Gagnon's name nor his voice would ever be directly associated with them. Then again, Teutonic Technopop is unlikely to have been a priority on his list of integrated-circuit speech interests. But it meant that while the first wave of Detroit Techno, notably Juan Atkins' phenomenal early records from 1984 onwards — as Model 500, and with Richard “3070” Davis as Cybotron — could hardly fail to acknowledge the unmistakable impact of Kraftwerk, Richard Techno-voice Gagnon went unheard and unheard of. If 1984 can be considered Techno's year zero (release of Cybotron's *Techno City*), it was also the year that Votrax International filed for bankruptcy. By now part of a greatly expanded microelectronics consumer market in which Votrax products were widely used, many of its employees moved on to, or set up, further influential electronic speech related companies in different parts of the US.

Richard Gagnon quietly maintained the workshop at his Michigan home. With 18 successful patents to his name, he was honored by the Smithsonian's Speech Synthesis History Project, and the legacy of his work is clearly important to present day synthetic speech technology. In 1994, however, Gagnon survived a stroke that has left him unable to remember any of his past work, and unable to speak.

(PE 2014)

The correspondence reprinted here was previously broadcast as “I Am the Daughter of Richard T. Gagnon,” as part of Paul Elliman, *Body Alive with Signals*, at Objectif Exhibitions in Antwerp, July 2014 — spoken by iPhone system voice Siri. With thanks to Richard T. Gagnon, Robert Elliman, Danielle Aubert, Steve Panton, Nicole Macdonald, Eric Gagnon, Juan Atkins, Mathew Kneebone, Chris Fitzpatrick, Janine Foeller, David Reinfurt, Dave Tompkins, Kristen Gallerneaux, Carl Craig, and Joel Peterson.

Cover image: Votrax SC-01, 1979

Date: 4 January 2013 21:15:21 GMT Subject: VOTRAX

Dear Paul.

I am the daughter of Richard T. Gagnon, inventor of all Votrax voice synthesizers in the 1970s and 1980s. He was very much a part of your “Detroit as Refrain” lecture given in Detroit in 2010. I would loved to have been there to listen to what you had to say about Votrax and Detroit music. You are the only person I’ve found to make the connections that you have in the brief description that I read about it, and I don’t know how to thank you for trying. If you want additional information about the Votrax and things you might not know about regarding its use, please email me. I might surprise you with a story or two. I listened to a recording of yours, “The Fog Horn,” on youtube from 2007. A voice on that sounds strangely familiar to me. I could be wrong? I am 37 years old. My father is 73 now. He had a stroke about 20 years ago and has been severely disabled ever since. The Votrax is based off of his own voice if that interests you. I can also direct you to the Smithsonian Speech Synthesis History Project that my father is a big part of if you are interested.

P.S. My father created the Votrax VS-4 and VS-6 in his basement by himself. I have as much awe and appreciation for it as you might. The Votrax VS-4 came out in 1974. It was the first commercially sold voice synthesizer in the world. Sincerely,

Date: 4 January 2013 23:47:09 GMT Re: VOTRAX

Thanks for writing, I can hardly believe it! I’m in London, I live here and just got home from swimming club training with my youngest daughter. It’s late now, I won’t say too much in this email other than to express how excited I am to hear from you. I hope your father is doing ok. I would like very much to speak to you about his work, of which I know very little but couldn’t help finding what information I could gather extremely interesting. Best wishes and thanks again for making contact,

Paul

P.S. Not a Votrax voice on *The Foghorn*, the lower “resolution” voices on

that are pitch-modulated Apple system voices. I was putting together a collection of available synth voices and combined what I had in the telling of that story, based on Ray Bradbury's short story *The Foghorn*. Some years ago I wrote briefly about the Kraftwerk record *Radioactivity* which is how I came to know about your father, I did assume that his work is an important part of the DNA of those later Apple system voices.

Date: 8 January 2013 03:37:22 GMT Subject: VOTRAX

Hello Paul,

I'm very happy that you e-mailed me back. I've been to London a couple of times to visit friends that are from there, once in 2000, and a second time in 2008. I'm great friends with a Sam Evans and a Mark Plowright, not that you would know them. Anyway, I am currently living in Kalamazoo, Michigan with my family. My parents live in Highland, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. I live about two hours west of them by car. I really wish my father could be the one to communicate with you in this email, but unfortunately it is impossible. He had a massive stroke in December of 1994, and he has been a shell of his former self ever since. He cannot communicate much about his career or his life in any meaningful way. You may have not found information on him because he has been unproductive for almost 20 years now.

The Internet has allowed me to fit some of the puzzle pieces together about his contributions to the world of voice synthesis. He was a one-man show. The advantages were that he could be his own boss and work at his own pace. The disadvantages were that he had to have companies like Federal Screw Works pay for the cost of his patents and provide manufacturing, distribution, and sales. My father would never have been able to afford to do that on his own. Single inventors can create the greatest innovations of all, but they often lack the resources and connections to bring the product to market alone. I'm not sure how expensive the patent process was at the time, but because there were so many needed it was cost prohibitive for my father to pay for all of them himself. For example, patents issued in the United Kingdom needed taxes paid on them yearly from what I found in his records. His patents were accepted by Canada, United States, Japan, United Kingdom, and others. My father

was a world class inventor, but not so great with the business side of things. If it was not for the Smithsonian giving him one hundred percent credit for Votrax, it would be hard for me to prove he was the one unless someone visited my parents' house and I went over artifacts with whoever was interested. I have found many different pieces of information that do give him the credit, but sadly most of the time Votrax is ever mentioned, the name Richard Gagnon is not very often alongside it. There are other very famous uses of his Votrax that he got zero credit for, some I'm finding out about just this past year. Because it was a product that anyone could buy it was easy to pretend that any individual made it other than my father. As far as I know, there were no other voice synthesis products available until about 1979 or 1980 other than Speak & Spell which really did not compare and was not true speech synthesis.

Kraftwerk did use Speak & Spell on their *Computer World* album in 1981 along with Votrax of course. All Kraftwerk albums before that used Votrax and a vocoder for synthetic sounding voices. The song "Numbers" is a good example of Votrax speaking in foreign languages. My father designed those programs used in that song for many different foreign markets. My father made a Votrax specifically for the German Market called a VS6G2 that they may have bought in conjunction with the English VS-6 in 1974. I screwed up the year I told you in the first email I sent you. It was 1972 that the VS-4 came out not 1974. 1974 was when the VS-6 came out. He started work on the VS-4 in 1970, and by 1972 it was ready to be sold. It went through a series of prototypes before the VS-4 was official. The information is all in the Smithsonian Speech Synthesis History Project, I just double checked it. Based on the time frame, Kraftwerk bought a VS-6 not a VS-4 if that matters to you. My father even went to Germany a few times during that period in regards to the Votrax development. I'm not sure who he met up with at the time though. The Votrax synthesizers were multi-lingual.

My father only had knowledge of probably half of the uses Votrax was used for. With the vast amount of information on the Internet these days, I am able to discover the most impressive uses of all that he unfortunately knew nothing about before his stroke. I could tell him now, but it does not mean much to him. As much as I like Kraftwerk, he was never thanked by them and I don't think they have never mentioned his name. But that

was repeated by many other important figures besides Kraftwerk. As far as I know, every Kraftwerk album from 1975 and later has used Votrax as a main synthesized voice other than a vocoder, and I can recognize it immediately. I was born in 1975. The year that Kraftwerk first used my father's voice. I remember starting to listen to the Votrax on a daily basis around 1978 through the 1980s. And I guess you could say I have an ear for his voice. It is my father's voice, his alter ego. The Votrax is my father if that makes any sense. Many people have confused the use of the Votrax with a vocoder. I think Kraftwerk has somewhat perpetuated that belief. I can clearly tell the difference between a vocoder by itself and a Votrax ran through a vocoder or other types of filters. The Votrax has a sound of its own obviously, even if it is distorted by whatever means. In 1981 my father was given a copy of *Computer World*. That was the first time that my father had listened to them even though they had been using it for six years before that. He did not realize the importance of them, but was still interested. I was only six at the time, but I remember him bringing the *Computer World* record home and putting it on his Panasonic Technics stereo system with Ohm speakers. I thought the color of the album cover was amazing. I did not know what to think of the music at that age, it probably was not until my father had his stroke that I started understanding how important their music was and still is. Kraftwerk is nominated for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for 2013. I hope they get it.

Richard had 18 patents in the speech synthesis field. His last patent expired this past year in 2012. It was issued a year after his stroke and sat for 17 years. I wish I could have carried on his work for him, but honestly it was way beyond my comprehension. I do have access to technical data from his personal records that I can scan or find on the Internet, and I have a fairly decent grasp of the history of how it has been used. I feel like I owe it to my father to figure all this history out that he was not able to learn about at the time. He was a great man, and really would help anyone he could. He was too honest and nice, and was taken advantage of in a variety of ways. I've decided it will be my hobby to try and get the story out one way or another, but I'm just not sure how to go about it. I know it will be difficult if not impossible, but I'm still going to try because I think some people in this world would like to know. I'm old enough now to take it seriously. Whatever questions you have I will do my best to answer them, and I'd also be happy to share whatever information I have with you.

If you really wanted to meet my father, I could arrange it and be there. I just want anyone to realize that he is brain damaged and can only take part in the most basic conversation. There is still a mind there considering how massive his stroke was. The doctors were amazed he survived. My father started to donate his personal synthesizers to the Smithsonian around the time that his health was deteriorating, I have access to setting up appointments with the Smithsonian. His collection can also be borrowed for museums anywhere in the world. I think they could even be demonstrated if they still work. There are some spare parts available in my parents' basement. After my father's stroke I tried to set up a very small lab for my father to do something but it never was possible after that. The house that they live in now is not the house that I grew up in. His original lab was very impressive. What he has now is just bits and pieces. But I might be able to spare something someday. I think there are a couple of Votrax Text to Speech products that very well might still work with a keyboard. I think one uses a VS-6, but I'm not a hundred percent sure. The Votrax synthesizers eventually became a single chip called the SC-01 and the SC-02, but they never quite matched up with the original VS-4 and VS-6 sound quality. They were much less expensive and easier to incorporate into products though. Votrax made most of its money from the chips in the 1980s. Over 50 million dollars worth of Votrax products were sold using my father's speech synthesis technology. Finally Federal Screw Works went bankrupt due to corporate greed and mismanagement.

IBM, Apple, Commodore, Tandy all used Votrax to speak in the early to mid 1980s. Votrax was the first voice synthesizer ever used in a personal computer. Here are a few of the more popular computers you might remember that used it to speak: IBM "Audio Typing unit," also IBM Talking Typewriter for the blind, and Talking Terminal; Apple II Sweet Micro Systems Mockingboard; Tandy/Radio Shack TRS-80 Speech Module; Votalker IB—IBM PC ISA card, Votalker AP—Apple II card, Votalker C64—Commodore 64 cartridge; DEC talk was available in the early to mid 1980s, but it cost thousands of dollars and needed an enormous amount of memory to run. Only universities and the wealthy could really justify buying it. My father designed the Votrax to be affordable and have decent sound quality. By the time DEC Talk came out, the SC-01 chip was only \$100 dollars or so. Although DEC talk sounded a little better, it came out 8 years after the Votrax. Dennis Klatt, the most famous person

related to voice synthesis, was in charge of the project. This is a quote he had to say about my father. “Apparently oblivious to all of the prior research detailed earlier, a man experimenting in his basement workshop, Richard Gagnon, designed a synthesis-by-rule program that eventually resulted in the Votrax SC-01 chip ... It is a remarkable device for the price.” Dennis Klatt at least gave my father that much. 1974 was the year that other companies and universities benefited from my father’s invention with absolutely zero credit given to my father. Michigan State University started their “Artificial Language Laboratory” using my father’s Votrax exclusively on their “Talking Computers” for the disabled. They used the Votrax from 1974 until the late 1980s. Never one single phone call to my father. The Laboratory still exists today, but the man in charge did not like my father and made sure he did not get any credit whatsoever. Another man did the very same thing to my father. You may have heard of him: Ray Kurzweil and the “Kurzweil Reading Machine.” The Votrax was the engine for the voice synthesis from the very beginning to the final products. Before the Internet age apparently it was easy to not give credit where credit was due. I don’t think it would be as easy to get away with today, but who knows. There is a link to the Smithsonian Speech Synthesis History Project at the bottom of this email. It provides a ton of information regarding my father and the voice synthesizers that he donated to the Smithsonian. He has the first eight items donated out of 173 listed. The man who contacted my father about the project wanted Richard to be first, because he knew my father did it on his own, as opposed to the teams of people that were involved with everything else on the Smithsonian’s speech project. My father was the only individual that contributed that many physical artifacts. They wanted them, if that tells you something.

I hope this is not information overload but I feel you deserve to be given this. There is plenty more if you are interested. Please don’t hesitate to ask anything whatsoever. I’ll do my best to try and assist you. Thank you so much for your time.

Date: 22 January 2013 23:47:09 GMT Re: VOTRAX

Apologies for not replying sooner. I’m preparing another version of my Detroit talk as part of an exhibition at the Marres Centre for Contempo-

rary Culture in Maastricht this Saturday. Since hearing from you I've been reconsidering my discussion of your father's work. In that respect this version won't be too different from previous. I will be able to say a few more things about Votrax thanks to your emails but the talk is mostly based around my experience in Detroit as a teenager with my own father, an auto industry worker emigrating from Liverpool who went on to work (as a production engineer) at Apple Computers, in California. The main focus of my talk is more closely connected to my father's career move, not only from the UK to the US but from cars to computers, which can be read in terms of wider social changes implicated in this shift. Your father's work occurs at the technological epicenter of these changes, where aspects of auto-industry engineering and production meet emerging breakthroughs in microelectronics and computer science. Apart from my own experiences — in Michigan and then San Jose/Silicon Valley — a key reference for my talk is the 1981 Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Soul of a New Machine* by Tracy Kidder, a closely observed account of small tech companies establishing the kind of industrial landscape that we know today. Let me get back in touch with you next week because I'm also in the process of working out travel for March involving a visit to York University in Toronto with a plan to pass through Detroit and possibly meet up with you and your father.

More soon and best wishes,

Paul

Date: 23 January 2013 03:52:54 GMT Subject: Votrax

Hello Paul,

No apologies necessary! If you would not mind, I want to switch e-mail addresses on you. I would prefer to e-mail you from my personal yahoo account from now on, it gives me more privacy. I'm going to send you something right after this, so that you will know my other email address.

Date: 25 January 2013 03:58:56 GMT Subject: VOTRAX

Hi Paul,

It sounds like your father and my father would have had some things to talk about. My father lived and died by the use of his Apple II's :) He loved them, and I think he still has one. He did most of his programming on them from the late 1970s through the 1980s. He then upgraded to an Apple II GS, but he always preferred the original. He knew that computer inside and out. I was the only kid in my neighborhood to have not just one, but two in the late 1970s. Everyone would come to see them, it was kind of a novelty. Apple Asteroids was obviously way better than the Atari version. Richard used a Kim-1 before that. I'm not sure what computer he might have used before the Kim, but it could be in their basement. I can definitely arrange a meeting with my father if you want.

The most important piece of information to remember about my father is that against all odds (considering the resources and years of experience available to Bell Labs or MIT) he developed the first commercially sold phonetic speech synthesizer in the world—the Votrax VS4 from 1972—in his own basement. From what my father told me, it really pissed off some very educated people. It was a decade before anyone ever caught up. The whole point of his design was to have unlimited vocabulary. He probably could have gotten the speech to sound better, but the unlimited vocabulary feature was the most important to him. I am including a copy of the Deed Of Gift to the Smithsonian, that way you know I am a hundred percent legitimate. You won't find it anywhere on the Internet. I've only shared it with a couple of friends. It was finalized last August of 2012.

Take care,

Date: 6 February 2013 20:10:26 GMT Subject: VOTRAX

Hi Paul,

I'm sorry to bother you again, I just wanted to let you know that I went through some of my father's storage over the past weekend. I decided to start sorting through things but really I just scratched the surface. I have access to all of my father's Votrax synthesizer projects from start to finish. The projects are documented with personal notes, full patent information, personal letters to Federal Screw Works, newspaper and

magazine articles about my dad or Votrax, and various schematics with source codes. No one has ever seen these artifacts before, except my father. I never could bring myself to do it until now. If you visit, you will be the first. I have never met with anyone before you in regard to my father's work. I wanted to wait until I found the right kind of person that could appreciate it on a level other than just the engineering feat. The following list are things I personally find interesting and maybe you will too.

1. A technical, authorized personnel for the purposes of testing and review record of *Computer World* album by Kraftwerk.
2. Phonetic Score data sheets for the same album above plus a couple of songs that ended up being on the 1986 *Electric Cafe* album. It documents where and how the Votrax was used in the songs *Computer World*, *It's More Fun To Compute*, *Numbers*, *Musique Non-Stop*, and *Technopop*. It also shows a song from Kurtis Blow (one of the first Rap artists), I wish I had the same information for the other albums, but I don't. Maybe if Votrax had been created in England, there would have been more accurate documentation, but even then probably not.
3. Two-page article from *The Detroit Engineer*, 1976. It explains why and how my father did it first. I never saw it until now. It is all in his own words and probably my favorite thing I've found so far. It touches my heart.
4. *Scientific American*, September 1972 ad for Votrax. I have the full mint condition magazine. "World's First Low-Cost, Miniaturized Voice Synthesizer Opens Communications Channels Between Man And Machine."
5. VOTRAX vanity Michigan license plate from 1983. My father was into automobiles, so to him it was special. In Michigan we used to have to get a new plate every year. The license plate is black with white lettering.
6. K8ARD Michigan plate from 1970 that my father had on his vehicle representing the year he created his first Votrax. They are the call letters for his HAM radio license.
7. A full VS-4 phonetic synthesizer keyboard with all of the phonetic keys.

His personal one with his name on the back. Very industrial looking, all metal brown, with plastic keys.

8. A full VS-6 phonetic synthesizer keyboard with all of the phonetic keys, slightly different keys than the VS-4. Also very industrial looking, metal grey, plastic keys.

9. Recordings given to the Smithsonian. The sound quality is excellent for a tape and there are many examples of his different speech synthesizers. The German version the VS-6G is on these tapes. Honestly I had no idea how terrific the speech intelligibility was from the VS-6. I was used to listening to the SC-01 and SC-02 chips from the 1980s. They don't compare to the older more expensive VS-6. If you hear the examples, I think you will be surprised too.

10. I have recordings from his last synthesizer from the late 1980s or early 1990s that I think never made it to market. It was 100% digital. The chip pamphlet said it would cost \$5 and have 10,000 voices. The patent for it was referenced so many times by huge corporations. I'm honestly confused as to whether it became something or not.

11. A large black and white photo of the house my father created the Votrax in.

12. Many brochures for products that used the Votrax, including various Votrax products themselves.

13. Large high quality black and white publicity photos of Votrax products. I'll end the list here, because I could keep going and going. I think after you meet up with my father you will be inspired. I'll try to do my best to be prepared for it. Given the amount of time between now and March I should be fine. Please let me know with a very quick e-mail that you got this and saw the Deed Of Gift to the Smithsonian, mostly because I switched e-mail addresses on you and I just want you to send emails back to this one from now on.

P.S. 2013 marks the 40th anniversary of the VS-6! Thank you.

Date: 19 February 2013 23:47:09 GMT Subject: Re: VOTRAX

Hi,

I just noticed your request for a quick reply and apologize for not doing that. I saw the Deed of Gift to the Smithsonian in the previous email you sent, and have been thinking a lot more about Votrax and your father's work. I've got the travel worked out and I can be in Michigan between Friday March 15 and Monday March 18. I'll be travelling from Toronto and going on to New York before flying home to London and I hope there is a day during that weekend that would be ok for us to meet. I will keep those days flexible and most likely be staying with friends in Lafayette Park, Detroit. My sense of your father has greatly intensified since you contacted me. It was wonderful to go through the checklist of Votrax items in your previous email. I very much look forward to meeting you and having the chance to talk about Richard and his work. Best wishes,

Paul

Date: 20 February 2013 03:32:25 GMT Subject: Sounds Good

Thank you for getting back to me. That weekend will be fine. It will be up to you where you want to meet. I don't know if you have an international driver's license for a rental car, or if you need me to come out your way. We can figure out those details. I'm flexible too, and I will try to accommodate you the best I can. It sounds like you have a lot going on, so no worries getting back to me for now. It's great that you have friends in Detroit. Lafayette Park is about a one hour car trip to my parent's house, if that was still something you were interested in. It's totally up to you. Take care,

Date: 11 March 2013 02:23:23 GMT Subject: Re: Votrax

Hi,

I'm writing to let you know that I am in Toronto now, having arrived from Austin, and will travel to Detroit on Friday. I can meet you anytime Saturday or Sunday, depending on which is better for you and hoping it

will be easy enough for you to collect me from an address in Hamtramck where I'll be staying with a friend at 2739 Edwin St —near the corner with Joseph Campau.

Best wishes and looking forward to meeting you,

Paul

Date: 11 March 2013 23:28:27 GMT Subject: Need To Cancel

Hi Paul,

I have some bad news to tell you in regard to meeting up with you this weekend. My best friend from childhood had his father pass away this past Friday. I am going to have to cancel meeting with you. I need to keep this next weekend open for him. It is obviously a tough time for his family and I need to be there for them. Please accept my most sincere apology. I hope this is plenty of time for you to change your plans. I would have let you know a couple of days ago, but I was not sure that you were still planning on coming. Thank you for trying; maybe some other time. If you ever do e-mail me again, please e-mail at this address. You may have forgotten that I asked if you could switch and not use the original e-mail contact that you used yesterday. If you don't ever e-mail me again I'll understand. Good luck in your wonderful endeavors and awesome work.

Sincerely,

Date: 12 March 2013 02:24:09 GMT Subject: Re: Need To Cancel

Hi,

Is there any way you would reconsider and try to meet me? I've put this trip together in order to meet you and your father and it was a complicated process. I'm in Toronto now and have booked the journey to Detroit. It is terribly disappointing if after all this you can't meet me. I may not be in Michigan again for some time, so I hope that you would be willing to reconsider while I'm in Detroit.

Best wishes,

Paul

Date: 13 March 2013 14:14:52 GMT Subject: Need To Cancel

Hi Paul,

Again I'm very sorry, however I will not be in Michigan this weekend as the funeral is out of state. This was a very unexpected situation and I really need the time to process it. I'm sorry for all of the trouble you went through to make your plans.

Sincerely,

Date: 13 March 2013 15:45:01 GMT Subject: Re: Need To Cancel

Hi,

Things don't always work out and I'm used to plans changing, but as you know I am independently interested in your father's work. Perhaps better if I write, as you suggest, to the Smithsonian for any help they can provide. In the meantime I was wondering would it be possible for me to still visit your father's house? I am here now having made this journey, and it would be extremely interesting to see where he lived and worked. I am very sorry to hear about the death of your friend's father, which I know is always a difficult time.

Best wishes,

Paul

Date: 17 March 2013 19:53:11 GMT Subject: 3-17-13

Hi Paul,

I'm sorry I did not get back to you sooner. I did not realize how interested you actually were in my father's work. The few emails that you did

send to me were not particularly long, and I did not get the impression that you were as interested as you appeared to be in your latest emails. When you initially mentioned coming to Detroit, I thought your trips within the US were already planned and that you were going to try to squeeze in Detroit if you could. It was not clear to me that you were planning the whole trip around coming to Detroit, and I'm sorry if my misunderstanding led to a waste of your time. After this week, I have realized that I am no longer interested in pursuing anything involving my dad or his work. Although I have some limited information, I cannot back any of it up with documentation. Individuals do not wish to be associated with information that has not been documented as factual, and this has to be considered highly important. Sadly, I would like to rescind any claims I may have mentioned to you involving my dad's work, and I withhold permission to use any of it. Protecting everyone's privacy has to be the first priority. I would like to strongly suggest that you do not pursue any of the claims I may have mentioned. If you do choose to conduct your own research into this, you will find that there is little information available. Please also realize that the Internet is not always as useful as one might expect. Allow me to close by saying that I realize that I was the one who initially contacted you, as I did have profound interest in your lecture. Again, I apologize for any misunderstandings and potential waste of your time. Sincerely,

Date: 17 March 2013 23:18:55 GMT Subject: Returned mail: see transcript for details

Hey, No problem. Happy to have heard from you. Best wishes,

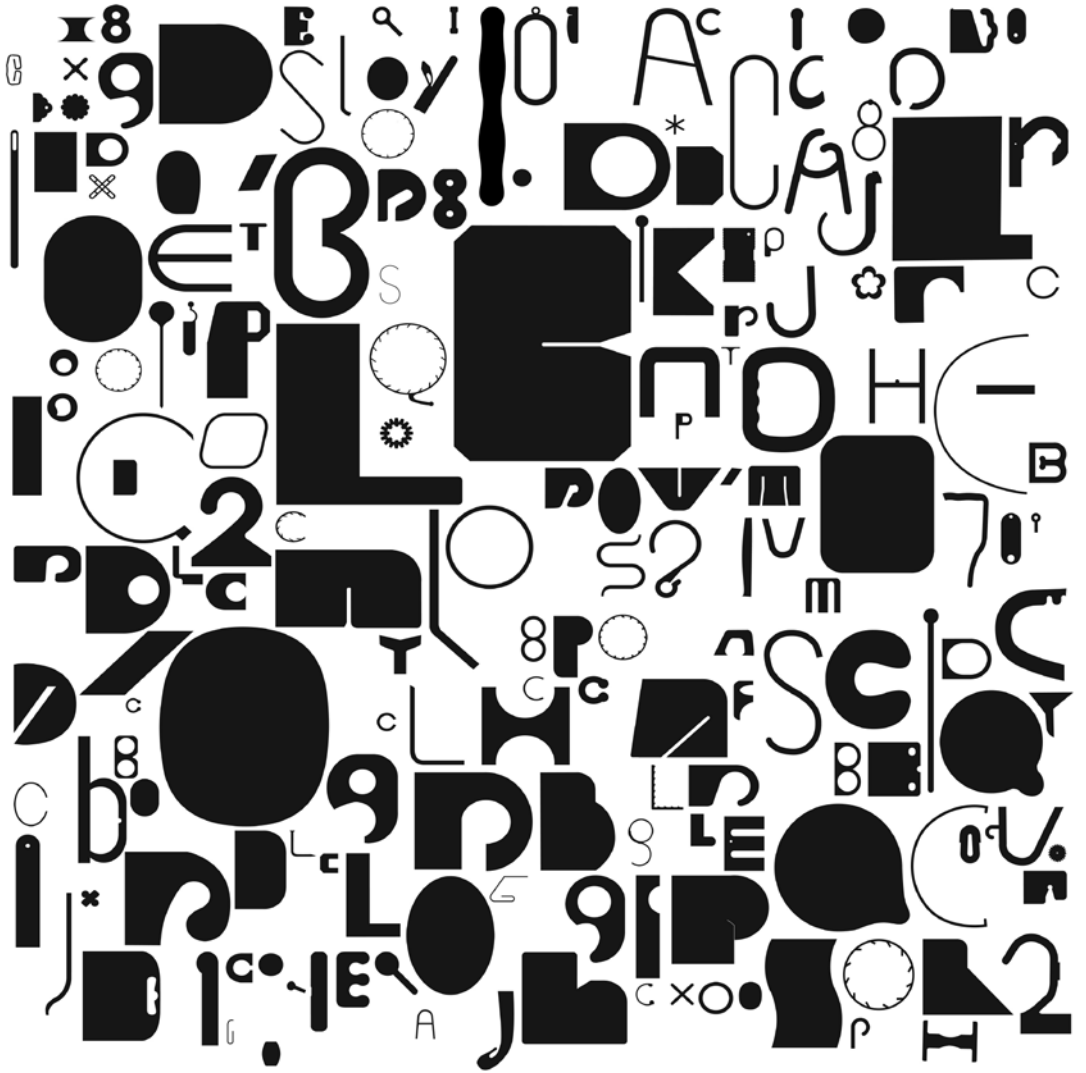
Paul

The original message was received at Sun, 17 Mar 2013 19:18:54 -0400 from c-68-43-249-217.hsd1.mi.comcast.net [68.43.249.217] ----- The following addresses had permanent fatal errors ----- (reason: 554 delivery error: dd This user doesn't have a yahoo.com account [-5] - mta1223.mail.sk1.yahoo.com) ----- Transcript of session follows ----- ... while talking to mta7.am0.yahoodns.net.: DATA <<< 554 delivery error: dd This user doesn't have a yahoo.com account - mta1223.mail.sk1.yahoo.com 554 5.0.0 Service unavailable Reporting-MTA: dns; vm-emlprdomg-05.its.yale.edu Received-From-MTA: DNS; c-68-43-249-217.hsd1.mi.comcast.net Arrival-Date: Sun, 17 Mar 2013 19:18:54 -0400 Final-Recipient:

RFC822; Action: failed Status: 5.0.0 Remote-MTA: DNS; mta7.am0.yahoodns.net Diagnostic-Code: SMTP; 554 delivery error: dd This user does not have a yahoo.com account [-5] -mta1223.mail.sk1.yahoo.com Last-Attempt-Date: Sun, 17 Mar 2013 19:18:55 -0400. Recipient Unknown.

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Paul Elliman, *The Smoke of My Own Breath*, 2009