

# PROLOGUE

Our personal spheres of influence extend far beyond our bodies. This *extended presence (EP)* includes the things we create and our effects on objects and other people—that is, our imprint on the world exterior to ourselves.

In the past, only celebrities—such as state and military leaders, writers, and actors—possessed widespread and enduring EPs, which were mostly limited to their public personas. But in recent times, digital information technology and related developments, such as social media, have resulted in the emergence and rapid growth of an extensive and very personal form of EP for most modern people. This new EP is becoming an extension of our selves and a primary means of communication in both the private and professional realms of our lives. It is an increasingly inseparable part of who we are and what we do.

Despite the personal EP's astounding progress, it suffers from multiple deficiencies: it is often fragmented and transient, and is subject to infringements of privacy and control. Yet, most of our EP's sources, and our underlying motives for its creation, are intricately interconnected, enduring, and very private.

As personal data applications become much more powerful, useful, and omnipresent, our dependence on them will grow until we become

virtually helpless without them. (As could be said of electric-powered technology today.) When our EPs contain a record of virtually all our actions and interactions, nearly every word we've ever uttered or heard, an account of almost all our memories and knowledge, and a log of every beat of our hearts or fluctuation in our blood-sugar levels, these technologies' potential for good will become immense. But, as with most powerful devices, the potential for their misuse will also rise. On current trajectories, as information technologies advance, individuals continue to lose ever more privacy and control of their EPs.

When we consider pressing problems in technology or medicine, we often assume that our "best minds" are working on finding solutions. However, with regard to many of the deficiencies of the personal EP, quite the opposite is true. The entities with the greatest power and influence in this domain, including corporations and nation-state institutions, often have interests that are not well aligned with, or are even starkly opposed to, those of individual data creators and consumers. And it is these same entities that employ and direct the efforts of the vast majority of our best technologists.

Consequently, with the exception of a few individuals and academics, and the staff of some small organizations, the best minds in technology are not engaged in solving these deficiencies, but are instead intently focused on creating a next generation of applications that will actually exacerbate these EP problems. Almost invariably, this is not due to any malevolence on their part but is simply a result of where the most interesting and financially rewarding employment is to be found.

Current attempts at correcting these EP shortcomings, such as the meager advances in data-privacy legislation, do not address their underlying causes and are little more than Band-Aids on a rapidly worsening affliction.

As our modern EP becomes ever more essential to our lives and an integral part of our personas, many of its needs begin to parallel our own. Thus, it requires rights and protections, including the right to exist in security for the duration of its natural lifespan (which may be much longer than ours) and the right to privacy. On further examination, it soon becomes evident that these basic rights are dependent on a broad

set of additional ones, such as the right to freedom from being owned by others and the right to economic autonomy.

Advanced nation-states, with their laws and conventions that regulate relationships among individuals, societies, and states, have usually provided the optimal frameworks for ensuring the well-being of individuals. They establish constitutions, recognize citizens' rights, and pass laws. They institute law enforcement services, safety standards, and health and education systems, and build numerous other physical and organizational infrastructures to serve their citizens' needs. Our EPs require similar apparatuses to ensure their integrity and well-being. The resulting EP empowerment and protections are of crucial consequence for many of our "real-world" concerns, such as our personal information technology and financial systems' security, our credit ratings, our personal safety and privacy, and our professional and social reputations.

In this book, I argue that existing systems in nation-states, or incremental adaptations of existing systems, are fundamentally incompatible with both the short- and long-term needs of our EPs. Traditional protectors, such as law enforcement agencies, are increasingly ineffectual in the face of powerful commercial forces or international cybercriminals. Regional and even national security mechanisms are confined by the limits of their jurisdictions and thus are inherently ill suited to confront the nebulous, anonymous, and often-global threats to the EP's integrity. Even the relevant legislation (where it exists) is inadequate and lags far behind technological progress. But perhaps most significantly, our own governmental agencies—the supposed guardians of our freedoms—are themselves frequently responsible for major transgressions on our privacies and other fundamental EP rights.

Consequently, a comprehensive solution to these problems cannot come in the form of minor adjustments to current systems; it cannot be established on the decaying foundations of outdated institutions or on foundations that were designed for completely different purposes. A fundamentally new approach is required.

I seek to convince you, the reader, that to allow our EPs, as extensions of our beings, to become all that they can be and everything that we wish them to be, it is essential to consolidate their parts into

conceptually unified bodies, each representing an individual. Moreover, these resulting entities need to be formally—legally and economically— independent from the people from whom they are derived. To achieve this, they should be established and recognized in dedicated state-like structures in which they possess a suitable set of citizen-like rights. To reflect the parallelism between these formalized consolidations of our EPs in their hosting environments and people in nation-states, I call the new entities *humems* in *humem-states*.

Only a dedicated state-like system can ensure the continuance of environment and consistency of purpose that are needed for our humems' long-term welfare; only a robust and well-funded state-like administration can counterbalance the EP related interests of corporations and nation-states, and counteract the EP detriments of nefarious individuals and groups; and only a customized state-like economic and legal environment can allow us and our humems to own and benefit from the immense value that they generate.

This book is an outgrowth of a number of years of practical preparation for building the foundation of a dedicated state-like system within existing jurisdictions. Underlying the vision is a real and concrete infrastructure designed by mainstream technologists and legal, financial, and taxation experts. Yet, state building—even in this ultra-modern form—requires the common will and coordinated effort of a broad assemblage of individuals and institutions. Here is the primary purpose of this work: to create a coherent worldview and terminology that will facilitate the communal actions needed to make the humem system a reality.