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The
SLOVENIAN STATE
ON THE INTERNET

DARREN PURCELL

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Florida State University, Department of Geography

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The development of the Internet has allowed for many claims about the future of democracy and governance. At one extreme, there are those who see the end of the state coming in the globalized world we inhabit. Others will point to computer technology and invoke the images of 1984, George Orwell's futuristic look at a state employing communications technology for control.

In this paper, I argue that the Internet is usable by the state as well as individuals and groups to serve its purposes. These efforts will be studied from the framework of the creation of space, particularly concepts of representations of space and representational spaces. The Internet facilitates the creation of images of place that are strategically used to influence perceptions of place.

In the case study, I examine Slovenia's government websites to demonstrate that a state does have a need to control information, to project images that are aimed to induce activities like tourism, investment, diplomacy, and establish an unequivocal state identity. The government sites demonstrate that through the use of symbols, propaganda cartography, carefully worded text, and other iconography, representations of space and representational spaces are created that support the goals of the Slovenian state, which are placed in the context of the country's position in the system of global capitalism.

INTRODUCTION

Claims about the impact of information technology on societies range from those proclaiming doom and gloom scenarios (Dery, 1996) at one extreme to those trumpeting the arrival of the information age as the panacea to societal problems, one that is more democratic and just (Bell, 1976). As will be argued below, the information revolution does not carry with it any inherent liberating powers. It has provided tools that are appropriated by many different actors to promote specific visions of the world and to accomplish strategic goals. Information technology is often described as being an avenue for resistance to the hegemonic power of the state. It is also trumpeted as a tool for the creation of identity, especially among social movements, (Adams, 1996; Alderman and Good, 1997) environmental movements (O'Lear, 1997), and individuals who wish to spread their messages to a wider audience outside the mass media. These mass media are often less than totally independent from the state or other influential members of groups within society. The us is no exception. Sussman argues today, mass media still shows the effects of the McCarthy Hearings of the 1950's in that critical points of view are often ignored as to not incur the wrath of politicians (Sussman, 1997.) Other countries of East-Central Europe face similar issues today as they attempt to guarantee free expression in a period of media and political transition (Splichal,1994.)

I do not wish to deny that information and communication technology is appropriatable by individuals and groups resisting the state, but I will argue that the very states being resisted are present in the realm of cyberspace. They too, depending on their role in the world-system, rely on information technology to carve out a space of resistance themselves, staking their place is cyberspace.

Through the World Wide Web and other communication technologies, states put forth images that are intended to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). These images will be classified using the terminology of Lefebvre, who analyzed the spaces created by social structures as a triad. The users of webpages and those who design them actively pursue *spatial practice*. Browsers and designers have goals in mind that are facilitated through communications technology, allowing both to transcend space and time to exchange information. Their communications and exchanges of information constitute spatial practice. What the de-

signers serving the state produce are *representations of space*, the official version of space that bureaucrats and leaders of ministries want projected as an idealized view of the country. Finally, Lefebvre includes *representational spaces* in the analysis. These are spaces that are created through the use of symbolism and imagination. Roberts and Schein point to art, film, and photographs as examples of these, though webpages would incorporate several of the aspects that comprise representational spaces, including state symbols, maps, and iconography (Lefebvre, 1991; Roberts and Schein, 1995.)

Those deploying specific representations of space and representational spaces attempt to convince capitalists that the conditions for capital accumulation are present in the state. If successful, the state has succeeded in helping to develop a spatial fix for capital (by encouraging the siting of production in a particular locale through tax breaks or lax regulatory structures) and managed to maintain it's place or even rise in the post-Cold War geopolitical order (Harvey, 1989). A state's relative position in the order is not determined by military might but by relative proximity through flows of capital from the major core institutions and states (Agnew and Corbridge, 1995, Diagram B, p. 206). It is these flows the representations are aimed at changing. Not only are representations important for attracting FDI for the state, but they are vital to tourism promotion, another source for capital accumulation.

Representations of space are not limited to economic imperatives, but apply as states attempt to accede to international state organizations such as the European Union, NATO, or the World Trade Organization. Attempts to join the EU on the part of several East European states or Chile's efforts to lobby for NAFTA accession demonstrate that states act to change perceptions, to effect change in the perceptions decision makers have of a place. It is on the basis of these perceptions that policy is made. Strategic placement of information may effect changes in how policy is made and who benefits from it, but the presence of information does not guarantee success.

The same representational terrain that social movements strategically employ to achieve goals is appropriated by the state to serve its needs. In the case examined here, Slovenia, one finds a state associated with negative journalistic representations of space such as the Balkans (with the connotations that come with this, see Myers, Klak and

Koehl, 1996) or as part of Yugoslavia, a geographic moniker that is inaccurate but still pervasive (Benderly, 1996). Slovenia has used the World Wide Web to establish a clear European identity, lobby for NATO accession (as a support to other efforts), and to attract business and provide information resources to the domestic populace and the international audience that comprises the Internet (See Brunn and Cottle, 1997 for more on the Slovenian use of the web.)

This paper will begin by investigating the role of information technology and the state, and how hegemony is maintained through the use of such technology. Second is a discussion of socio-semiotic analysis, the method used for analyzing particular texts (webpages in this case) for this paper. By way of illustration, I conduct a case study of particular attempts to site Slovenia in particular representations of space. The analysis of specific types of webpages will identify the type of discourse the state wished to pursue. Efforts to disassociate Slovenia from the Balkan region, to position Slovenia as modern state with technological capability, to argue that it was qualified for NATO accession, to attract foreign direct investment and to facilitate tourism expenditures will be examined.

CLAIMS ABOUT
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Many observers claim that the information revolution will transform the way we work, play, have sex, and even think. (Dery, 1996; Turkle, 1995). The most often cited transformations would be the possibility of telework, videoconferencing, and the time-space distanciation of the industrial system that gives rise to more powerful and concentrated global cities serving as planetary command and control centers in the world-system. But as pointed out elsewhere (Graham and Marvin, 1996), information technology may instead enhance the need for physical contact, not making cities obsolete. It may necessitate greater physical mobility in space. If anything, the increasing number of contacts that one makes and maintains via the Internet may indeed foster connections requiring co-presence to support them. Examples of this would be the increased need for delivery of goods ordered by the Internet. In this example, information technology merely transposes who is commuting (delivery to the home as opposed to shopping in a mall).

The most optimistic views were trumpeted by Daniel Bell and Alvin Toffler in the 1970's and 1980's, whose claims of greater democratization and the economic benefits of information work were indeed rosy ones (Bell, 1976, Toffler, 1980). While much of the United States workforce is engaged in information work broadly defined, Schement and Curtis (1995) counter that no real transition has taken place, and in fact the information age may be viewed as the expansion of industrial capitalism. They argue that intensifying market competition and the increasing need for accurate command and control functions drove the expansion of the information age.

It should be pointed out that despite the greater commodification of a range of information and concomitant services (the explosion of geographic information systems, geodemographics and marketing services, Goss, 1995) these technologies are not only useful to capital. Ostensibly to promote greater efficiency and rational use of both natural and human resources, information technology is permeating more aspects of government. Command and control of data and information is as vital for the functioning of the state as it is for business. This leads us to question why the state is using information technologies as strategi-

cally as they do. What are the underlying forces that guide them to master information and communication technology, which leads to the mastering of space? The next section addresses the role of information and the state.

INFORMATION AND THE STATE

Information technology is simultaneously a resource and threat to the state, in waging war and projecting influence (Mills, 1998). The 'subversive' role of the Internet in the Zapatista Revolt against the Mexican state and the resistance via fax machines to the Chinese Crackdown in Tiannemen Square (Adams, 1996) illustrates that states are trying to control a technology that is appropriated globally. This fosters the development of extra-territorial movements and groups that ignore international boundaries in the manner that citizens of a particular country may ignore internal boundaries.

This is a concern to the u.s. Defense Department, as illustrated in the literature that outlines the threats to national security brought about by the increasing reliance on technology. The technology use creates a double-edged sword of highly effective information systems that are seen as more vulnerable than ever before to threats such as hackers (Pace and Cebrowski, 1997). The use of information technology is an obvious concern, one that the Defense Department has taken very seriously. This is demonstrated by the way in which it packaged information on the Persian Gulf War to the public and news services. The tactics included carefully selected sound bites, and video game imagery that cut off specific forms of discourse in favor of those the Pentagon wanted the public to consume (Sussman, 1997). Information technology provides the military with another weapon in the propaganda war, regardless of who the intended victims are; domestic or international.

Defense is not the only area in which the state is employing information technology. It is clear from the cases cited by Rischard (1996), that information technology is used to improve efficiency and create better governance as states provide services and regulate economic and social activity. Graham and Marvin (pp. 368-373, 1996) describe the use of telematics in government services provision as Janus-faced. They point to the commodification and privatization in the public service sector, such as the teleconferencing of criminal trials. These appear to take time-space distanciation into a new policy realm, but have positive benefits in the provision of some services whose costs may be reduced through telematic technology. However, issues of justice abound in these distanciated judici-

aries. The jury is still out on the impact of information technology mediated government services.

States need to control information for economic purposes as well. In a globalizing economy, one where mobile capital constantly searches for a spatial fix (Harvey, 1989) to obtain momentary economic advantage, states attempt to project images that will induce capital to place fixed investment within the state's physical borders. These images must function as both representations of space (the projected image of the territorial state, in this case, the space as 'open for business') and representational spaces (the envisioned space expressed through competing ideologies, such as capitalism.) In combination, both provide a sense of security for global capitalist interests and for the citizens of the state themselves.

It is not enough to declare that states need to create and control information. How the concern over information and capitalism is interwoven requires explanation, so that we understand the role it plays in state functions. As Clark and Dear (1984) make clear, the state is not neutral in the deployment of state power; it is tightly entwined with the capitalist economy as it seeks to facilitate continued accumulation. In the context of the information age and global capital, states must use whatever means necessary to support economic growth within their territories. Public policies such as tax holidays, international trade zones, right to work legislation and varying environmental regulation all seek to draw capital to the state as the next spatial fix. Strategic use of cyberspace and Internet technology performs an important function in pursuit of this goal, making the state's message available around the clock, and through it, strategically shaping the representations and representational spaces, and thus the discourse conducted by those who control capital.

The use of information, according to Clark and Dear (p.53, 1984) is institutionalized in the state. Their typology of state apparatuses includes communications and media as a sub-apparatus of the integration mechanism. Under the integration function, the information subapparatus is used to create and promote ideology through dissemination of information. While states control information through censorship, the information sub-apparatus may encourage the spread of specific data or a particular ideological viewpoint. These messages or signs serve as signals to global capital, a sign that the country is open to

business, that it is receptive to global interests, and that this is the place to invest.

States also manipulate information to foster nationalist sentiment. The state strategically employs specific signs and texts to aid the on-going nation-building process or the first attempts to construct a nation-state. In the information age, one could say a new country needs a map, and that map needs to be placed on the Internet as one argues for the existence of a state where none existed previously. The continued presence of webpages marking the territorial map of Serbian Kraijina, three years after seizure of the Serb-held Croatian territory that comprised it, is an example of the perceived need for a state presence on the Internet (Jackson and Purcell, 1997).

Another symbolic function of state presence on the Internet is that it makes the state seem technologically sophisticated, and open to cyberspace visitors. The sign of a command of information technology is demonstrated as the state provides more services via the Internet. Examples include on-line application systems for state employment for Florida (ostensibly set up to attract a larger pool of qualified candidates), or information about services the state provides, such as data and information resources (State Department traveler's information or speech transcripts). One also finds substitution for traditional services (The US's tax collection agency, the Internal Revenue Service, now encourages electronic filing of tax documents to provide faster processing.) All demonstrate that services the state provides can be enhanced or substituted for by Internet communication.

In summary, the state's provision of these services to an expanding (though still predominantly elite) audience, signifies a great deal, including service, information, and economic opportunity. The state also represents its technological sophistication through the use of information and communication technology. States encourage agencies to construct websites, and state forms will often have URLs on them. The information sub-apparatus is expanding, permeating other branches of the state to promote itself.

How to study the representations and representational spaces the state creates is a difficult question, as the discussion above outlines many facets of information and the state. The next section addresses the rationale and methodology used in this study, to address the research issues.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
WITH WEBPAGE RESEARCH

Analysis of any text (in the form of landscape, art, poem, or novel) is problematic, and the text found in webpages or other Internet documents is no exception. Webpages exist in multiple contexts and this affects interpretation. They are created in specific places, replete with the political and cultural biases that inform the designers. These texts are then transferred to computers and browsers that may exist within the same general social context or to places thousands of miles away. They are read by browsers who may have no knowledge of an issue or place save what is on the screen they are viewing at the time.

Socio-semiotic analysis provides a contextualized methodology for analyzing webpages, which by the nature of the technology, encounter many spatial contexts. The multiple spaces and contexts the information travels through means that stability of meaning is problematic. Socio-semiotics, as developed by Gottdiener (1995), argues for the positioning of signs in the contexts in which they exist when created, but cognizant of the fact that interpretation is also key to understanding the text. Socio-semiotics emphasizes both the signs and the exo-semiotic structures (economic systems, nationalism, cultures, the state) in which they exist. It also admits that connotation (the creation of meaning) of symbols often occurs before denotation (the actual writing or creation) of the sign through the existence of codified ideologies. It takes seriously the interaction of the sign and those who must encounter it in every-day life (thus the meanings the individual attributes to the text), and finally, that signs are appropriatable for commodification (a point that Gottdiener explores more fully.) I claim the same signs are appropriatable by the state as well, if not always for purposes of commodification, then for other purposes that support specific state aims.

The analysis of the webpages will be limited to situating them in specific socio-political and economic contexts. Ascertaining the third part, the incorporation of these signs into daily life is beyond the scope of this particular project. Further work employing socio-semiotic analysis requires sensitivity to the issue of how the signs and symbols analyzed are incorporated. To do this in the context of state created websites, it may take focus groups looking at the

pages, both by citizens of a particular state and foreigners. By this, it would be possible to examine the effects of signs, and whether individuals or corporations act upon them. This type of analysis attempts to avoid the top-down analysis of the Cartesian gaze, by grounding the analysis in clear contexts, though this too will leave room for disjunctures between intended messages and the perceptions of a mass audience. As stated above however, this study does not attempt this at this time.

Another caveat is that the pages to be examined are in English. While English serves as a de facto lingua franca for the Internet, some countries have made extensive efforts to insure that webpages for the state are in the official languages of that state. The Slovenian government site provides ample proof of a commitment to insuring that domestic browsing is possible. This may indicate a commitment to transparency in the way these efforts are implemented. At the very least, it allows the populace to have access to the documents that exemplify state policy.

All pages that are cited below were printed to comprise a data set during the periods from March 15, 1998 to April 8th, 1998 and August 25th to September 15th. Changes to pages occur quickly as updates are produced and archives constructed, thus the importance of knowing when the page was analyzed. Changes to websites are relatively easy to make and thus the image states project may change as quickly as an agency or director desires.

THE SLOVENIAN CONTEXT
IN THE LATE 1990s

Slovenia's presence on the Internet was chosen for study on several grounds to be discussed below. I will address the perception problems of Slovenia and how the country is perceived by others. The geopolitical setting for the country is also examined, particularly references made by the state leadership in regards to the dominant hegemon, the United States. The role in the global economy that Slovenia plays is also examined, to set the context for one particular effort at representation by the state. Lastly, the relative familiarity the country possesses with the Internet is highlighted, a context that forces the state to deal with domestic consumption of it's sites.

Perceptions of Slovenia are often tied to the Balkans and the negative images that this connotes (for formation of the idea of the Balkans, see Todorova, 1997). Slovenia is sometimes confused with Slovakia by geography students, and Slovenian scholars point to the undifferentiated images people produce, often equating Slovenia with Yugoslavia, seven years after independence. Slovenia's actual proximity to Croatia and Yugoslavia, irregardless of actual happenings on the ground, lead some to consider the place to risky for investment or tourism (See Bennett, 1998), thanks to cartographic images of the state. This form of contagion logic, while ignoring the facts, does have the potential to encourage investment in places that are deemed safer in the eyes of investors, thus costing Slovenia valuable FDI.

Slovenia is a state that possesses a specific view of itself in the context of Europe and European security, one that clashed with the geopolitical views of one dominant country, the United States, in particular. Slovenia's leadership demonstrates a keen awareness of the constraints it faces in the geopolitics of late 1990s. As Milan Kučan commented in a press conference, after meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton, he was,

"...convinced that for a country such as Slovenia, in its relations with big countries, the main concern is how we can be of interest to these countries. And how we can gain their attention. Not in any sensationalist way, but by being successful and having something to say about the things that interest these countries" (Kučan, September 25, 1997.)

This indicates a government with the need to attract positive attention from the u.s. and other sources of global capital through a multiplicity of media and state overtures. These try to make the state interesting and valuable to outsiders, and yet simultaneously project an image that affects the way domestic observers see the government and their own country as well.

Slovenia's role in the global economy, which is not a power position, would be labeled by Agnew and Corbridge as, "outpost of global capitalism, in the ex-Socialist Countries" (Agnew and Corbridge, 1995, pp. 205-207.) In this relative position, outside the regional trading blocs of the dominant states, Slovenia faces trade barriers, tariffs on exports, and lacks the subsidies of eu development programs such as the Common Agricultural Policy (cap) to make their products more competitive.

Additionally, while Slovenia was the most economically developed part of former Yugoslavia, it still experienced a socialist government. This experience undoubtedly has an effect on the current business culture, and on the economy as a whole. Reports of difficulties during the transition to a market-driven economy, such as delays in implementing private ownership laws, have hindered development of the new image of Slovenia as an island of capitalism. To attract capital, assurances of stability and security must be made, thus a reconfiguration of representations of space via the Internet is called for. This can be done by providing email and www site addresses for state or private agencies that deal with business interests, or the development of business information sites.

Lastly, Slovenia is well connected by many measures for domestic Internet connections. *Business Central Europe* claims that Slovenia was the third most connected state in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of 1997. By virtue of internet hosts per million population, Slovenia was behind Germany and Estonia, but ahead of countries perceived to be making the transition to capitalism faster, such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland (Business Central Europe, 1998.) This level of connectivity with the Internet indicates the presence of a populace that understands how to use the Internet.

What follows in the next section is an analysis of specific types of webpages that exemplify Slovenian efforts to direct discourse through the representations of space and representational spaces it strategically attempts to create.

These efforts must be seen in the contexts described above, both the disadvantages and advantages Slovenia has. The areas I will address include attempts to characterize Slovenia as non-Balkan, European in character, and above all, not associated with the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Secondly, Slovenia's image as a modern, technologically advanced state is analyzed through the websites that promote and support this image, sites representing departments and ministries that provide technical support for the government. Third, Slovenia's image as it tried to accede to NATO membership in 1997 is examined, as it failed when contrasted with U.S. perceptions of Slovenia. These conflicting images will be discussed. Next, state websites supporting the country's application to become a member of the European Union are examined. The next two themes, environment and tourism, are highly related as the country promotes itself as a green portion of Europe, one that has a variety of biomes and attractions that depend on the quality of the environment. It is the state that is expected to preserve parts of it for environmental reasons and yet balance the need for economic development for the country. Finally, the efforts to attract foreign capital via several business oriented sites will be examined, sites that extol the virtues of Slovenia as a base of operations, virtues that are reflective of specific worldviews, along with promoting financial security for those who choose to start businesses in Slovenia.

THE BALKAN QUESTION

The positioning of the state in the media is directly related to the creation of image by official state bureaucracies, such as tourism promotion boards. Ryan (1990) points to arguments made by the Australian government, that creation of a 'national stereotype' (Ryan, p. 135) aids the creation of trade treaties, defense pacts, and a variety of links that may help the state. For Slovenia, creation of a non-Balkan image would have positive impacts, such as redrawing the mental maps of those in charge of deciding where foreign direct investment is likely to have maximum return, where security zones should be established, and where tourists will spend their holiday packages.

A variety of government pages, especially the foreign ministry entry pages emphasize the "Europeaness" of Slovenia, in sharp distinction with Balkaness, which is seen as 'un-European'. The former Yugoslavia, and by association, Slovenia, is ideologically conceived of as the locus of "passions of ethnic hatred and primordial violence" (Morley and Robins p. 143, 1995.) Lytle (cited in Morley and Robins, p. 143) claims the Balkan region is seen as "...a body infected with nationalism, rather than as a war possibly amenable to any form of mediations or intervention" (ibid.) Slovenia, by virtue of a common past with Yugoslavia, is
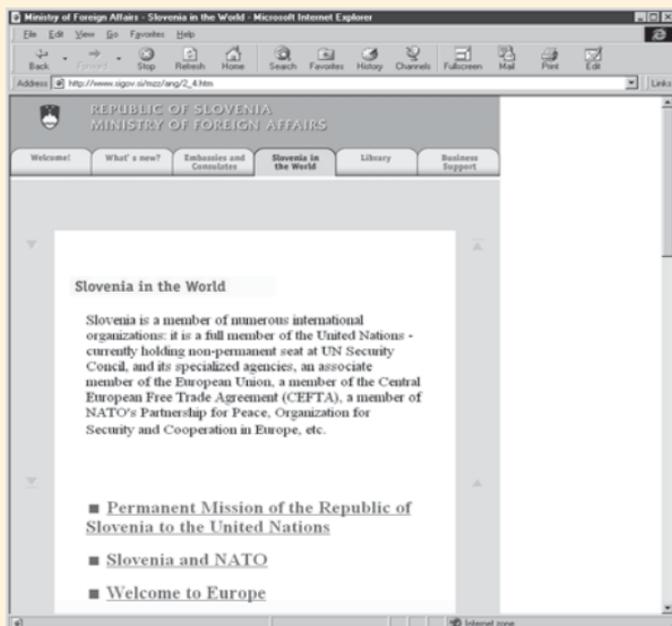

FIGURE I

attached to the region. Thus it remains tied with the past in the mental maps of many foreigners despite fact that fighting occurred primarily in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Todorova (p. 185-186, 1997) points out that American media far more than European media were more inclined to label the war as Balkan, as opposed to providing a more specific place name. By virtue of position in Cartesian space, and in the maps of physical geographers, Slovenia must put forth effort to change identity.

The symbolic efforts at connecting with Europe are visible on the government www pages. On the Slovenian Foreign Ministry pages, a link titled "Welcome to Europe" (Figure 1, http://www.sigov.si/mzz/ang/2_4.htm) whisks the browser to the Europa homepage (an European Union government site). The Slovenian Foreign Ministry site serves as an entry point to the EU's services and information online. By making such a link, the question is clear, does Slovenia gain greater Europeaness through association? If personal websites indicate parts of the identity through chosen links, does the strategic use of the link imply a state identification of itself as European in quality? It is a question that only the browsers themselves may answer but one that the Slovenian state would answer in the affirmative.

The entry page for the Slovenian government site (Figure 2, http://www.sigov.si/) features a dual language option,
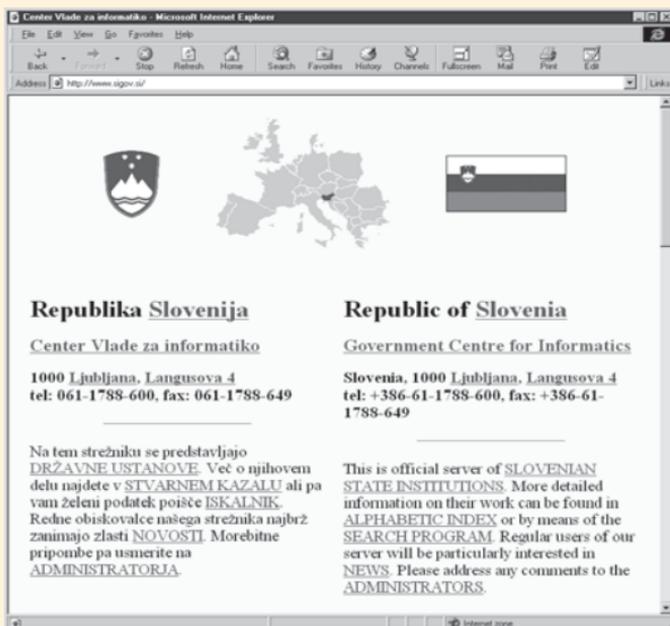

FIGURE 2

providing service for both domestic and international audiences. However, the map in the top center of the page is the most interesting representation of space put forth. Slovenia is cast as slightly right of center in a Europe that excludes the Scandinavian peninsula, the Baltic states, and the successor states of the former Soviet Union, producing a map that places Slovenia in a near-central position. The deliberate use of cartographic manipulation to create signs is not new, (Pickles, 1992) but its application to webpages is novel, given the medium and the particular audiences that are being reached.

President Kučan is also invoked, as the Office of the President page (Figure 3, http://www.sigov.si/cgi-bin/spl/ upr/ang/index.html) provides a greeting from the President, that welcomes cybertravelers to a site that he hopes will offer the browser "...both interesting and useful information." Complete with a picture of Mt. Triglav (featured on the state crest), the page provides another view of the Slovenia that is at odds with the mental maps of the region. The browser is extended a friendly greeting from the President of this small country, but one that advertises the information aspect of the pages, not the propaganda function.

In the analysis of the sites, there is lack of references to Yugoslavia, save a reference to 1991 as the date of independence from the former Yugoslavia. "Balkan" is not a term found in statements at the entry level pages, and checks of deeper pages revealed none as well. It is telling what lan-
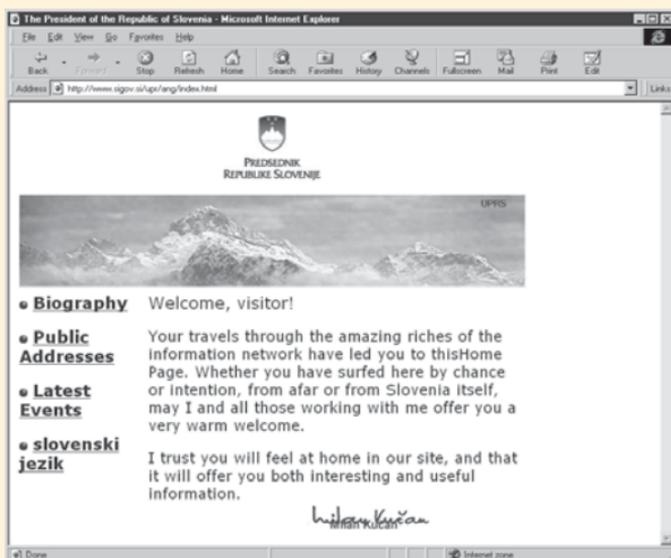

FIGURE 3

guage Slovenia's government chose to exclude from the site. Eschewing vocabulary tying Slovenia to the recent past and the political spaces of former Yugoslavia, these government pages demarcate clear boundaries and a new identity as an independent entity, but one that is European.

YES, WE ARE ON-LINE - SLOVENIA AS MODERN STATE

The appearance of being a modern state now includes a presence on the Internet and advanced computing technology for information gathering and manipulation. The Government Centre for Informatics (CVI) (Fig 4. http://www.sigov.si/cvi/ang/cvi-intro.html) serves the state in the new aspect of governmental apparatuses, that of high technology in the offices and in data management. It defines its functions in terms of several goals:

"reduced expenses and higher efficiency of state institutions' operations; data security and protection; unified technologies and standards for maximum system integration and best investment yield; design of IT with maximum flexibility that standards allow; increased throughput in communications between state and local institutions; installation, operation, management and maintenance of the state's IT infrastructure which ensures common communications and computer capabilities. (September, 10th, "http://www.sigov.si/cvi/ang/cvi-intro.html)

Thus we see several things here that are quite symbolic. First, we witness the cyber manifestation of bureaucracy as it justifies the existence of the apparatus. Bureaucratic institutions are very effective at justifying continued expenditures in budgets by articulating the importance of the work performed. Here, the work is important because it improves efficiency, increases throughput, and facilitates increased communications between groups. These are all terms from business and the ideology of the markets that have permeated and percolated through this ministry.

Secondly, we see that the state has an arm that is committed to facilitating specific goals in the realm of information and communications. This serves as the strongest symbol of information prowess as Slovenia aims to be seen as modern and technologically capable in the competitive capitalist world the state must compete in.

One of the more important roles is as manager of the state's various databases, those for the parliament, the central statistical office, and the ministry of finance, among others. As keeper of information for several entities, it justifies the existence of the information apparatus through demonstrating the value it holds. In the name of efficiency, it handles the databases for multiple ministries and government offices. This provides it a great deal of power

Government Centre for Informatics (CVI) - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Go Favorites Help

Back   Forward   Stop   Refresh   Home   Search   Favorites   History   Channels   Fullscreen   Mail   Print   Edit

Address http://www.sigov.si/cvi/ang/cviintro.html   Links

Government Centre for Informatics (CVI)

CVI was established in January 1993 as a governmental agency, responsible for implementation of information technology (IT) in state institutions.

Goals of CVI projects:

- reduced expenses and higher efficiency of state institutions' operations;
- data security and protection;
- unified technologies and standards for maximum system integration and best investment yield;
- design of IT with maximum flexibility that standards allow;
- increased throughput in communications between state and local institutions;
- installation, operation, management and maintenance of the state's IT infrastructure which ensures common communications and computer capabilities.

To achieve these goals the government of Slovenia adopted the Strategy for providing the state bodies with an information infrastructure by the year 2000.

Competence of CVI:

- design and setup of IT in state institutions; supply, distribution and maintenance of IT equipment;
- operation of state institutions' computing centre and their communications network;
- providing common telecommunication services and e-mail;
- application software development, advising state institutions concerning IT planning and implementation, professional control during application software development and implementation, installation of telecommunication equipment, providing required quality of IT services and products, methodological and technological coordination during project development;
- methodological and technological solutions regarding connecting to and using public data bases and enabling information services to state institutions and other users;
- professional education and training for effective use of IT.

Internal organization of CVI

CVI is divided into five departments which cover various fields:

Development and advisory department:

- defines and establishes uniform standards and methodologies for IT development in state institutions;
- provides advice to state institutions and controls IT solutions development according to users' requests;
- develops software (this activity is reduced due to limited manpower);
- initiates wider use of large national databases (e.g. people, territorial units' and companies' registers) which causes (among other advantages) important reductions of costs;
- ensures a high level of protection during personal and business data use;
- contributes to a higher quality of work done in state institutions by using modern IT tools; this simplifies, reduces costs and speeds up work.

Computing and telecommunications department

- develops, performs management and control of state institutions' communication network;
- offers communication services;
- introduces communication standards;
- works on processing for state institutions' needs.

System support department supports and improves the mainframe's software and hardware, protects access, secures data and tunes the operation of the whole system.

Microcomputer technology department

Done   Internet zone

through tasks such as:

"design and setup of IT in state institutions; supply, distribution and maintenance of IT equipment; operation of state institutions' computing centre and their communications network; providing common telecommunication services and e-mail; application software development, advising state institutions concerning IT planning and implementation, professional control during application software development and implementation, installation of telecommunication equipment, providing required quality of IT services and products, methodological and technological coordination during project development; methodological and technological solutions regarding connecting to and using public data bases and enabling information services to state institutions and other users; professional education and training for effective use of IT." (September, 10th, "http://www.sigov.si/cvi/ang/cvi-intro.html)

Thus the Centre insures that the government has efficient, working computing and telecommunications hardware. It also insures the presence of a cadre of people that can support the technological goals of the state as it competes with those entities with equal or greater technology. However, by invoking the jargon of the business world, it positions itself as a valuable part of the state apparatus, improving the performance of the state as a whole and helping to foster competitiveness.

NATO ACCESSION AND IMAGE

The question of NATO expansion concerned Slovenia's foreign ministry throughout 1997, as NATO would decide what countries would be among those invited in the next round of NATO expansion. Here, the key was not concern over identity as an independent state, but the readiness of Slovenia to join Western security alliances. Slovenia had been a member of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) and the government thought it met many of the criteria for NATO accession. To bolster it's image abroad, Slovenian Foreign Minister Zoran Thaler addressed major meetings of the Council of Europe and the West European Union before the Madrid conference in July of 1997. The remarks were posted to the foreign ministry's website

Similarly, U.S. views of Slovenia (and other applicants) appeared on the Internet as well. These statements, given by Secretary of Defense Cohen and Secretary of State Madeline Albright, were posted to the U.S. State Department site (http://www.state.gov/). Thus, we see a state with limited power vis-a-vis the dominant hegemon using the Internet to argue against the position that it is placed in by another state.

Slovenia was fortunate to have help from Germany during the push for independence, which continued as NATO expansion was being considered. This support for inclusion in NATO eventually encompassed nine European members of the organization. However, US concerns as hegemon trumped the wishes of the European members. Selling NATO expansion to the US Senate was clearly going to be a difficult proposition with three states (Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) joining, much less five that the Europeans were proposing (adding Slovenia and Romania), though this does not appear in US web documents. Arguments for turning Slovenia down focused on other issues. These included claims such as slow development of private property laws, a lack of a fully free-market economy, and a short experience as a democratic government, all of which came to a head during the preceding months before the NATO expansion discussions in Madrid (Purcell, 1998)

To counter early signals that Slovenia might not be admitted, Foreign Minister Thaler's remarks were placed on the ministry website (Fig 5. http://www.sigov.si/mzz/ang/2_4.htm.) These documents were simply the speeches presented at various meetings, but the ministry felt they should

be placed on the Internet. The texts demonstrate that Slovenia tried to put forth a clear role in the geopolitical map of an expanded NATO. Slovenia cast itself as willing to develop a modern, professional military of NATO standard. It would be a net producer, not a consumer of collective security, and could serve as a role model for states to the southeast, demonstrating that cooperation with international bodies did pay benefits.

The criteria for NATO expansion was not solely along military lines, but included other standards. Minister Thaler addressed these by pointing out that,

"Slovenia fulfills basic conditions for the entry into the Alliance; these conditions were defined in the NATO enlargement study, and are: political democracy, market economy, appropriate security of human rights, control of the democratically elected authorities over defense structures, and good-neighborly relations." (Thaler, March 24-25, 1997)

The potential as a role model for other Balkan (but note, not termed Balkan) states was made at an earlier speech to the Council of Europe in which Slovenia had the potential to,

"...represent a positive example for the countries situated southeast of Slovenia's borders; an example which proves that peaceful and
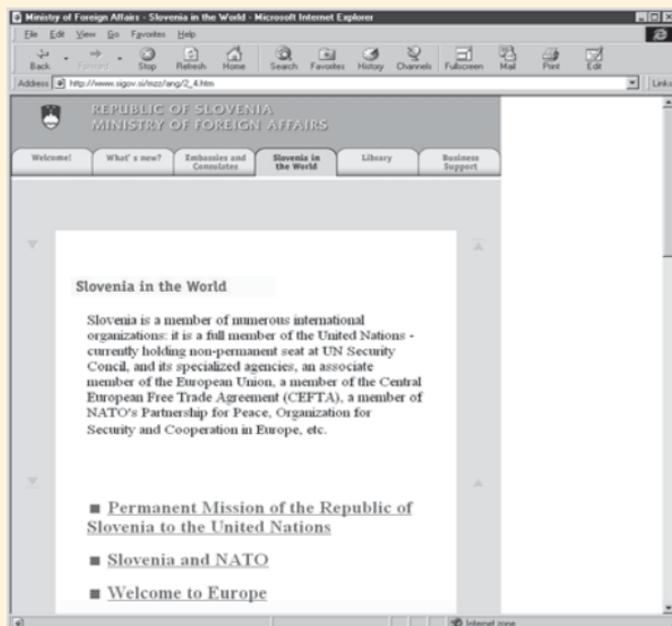
FIGURE 5

democratic policy is appreciated. The entry of Slovenia in NATO would bring about the institutionalizing of stability in this part of Europe." (Thaler, April 24-26, 1997)

This makes it clear, that the Balkan moniker was deliberately avoided by the foreign minister by broadly defining who they would model for, and Slovenia cast itself as the keystone to the region. By cementing the relationship with NATO, the triumphal march of western style democracy and peace might pass through Slovenia to the southeast. Thaler also pointed out that though Slovenia was part of a former communist country, Yugoslavia (and thus Slovenia) had never been a member of the Warsaw Pact. The possibilities for this tack are interesting. First, the attempt is to make Slovenia appear to be a less threatening addition in Russian eyes by emphasizing the concerns of Russia over the three leading candidates. Secondly, it is an effort to force the United States through the lesser European partners to consider security in something other than a east-west focus. By including this argument, Slovenia tapped into arguments that France and Italy made for a southern NATO command, and thus gained their support as a potential partner in the southern theater. This is particularly important as Slovenia indicated that many of the security concerns that it faced were not traditional military ones:

"However, in the absence of a macro security framework, processes may occur at the micro level, exerting a destabilizing effect on neighbouring (sic) countries; these processes may also spread outside the region. What I have in mind here is organized crime, in particular the illicit traffic in drugs, weapons and dangerous substances, and illegal immigration." (Thaler, April 24-26, 1997).

Thus NATO accession was to address security issues that the alliance does not directly deal with, but these were exactly the concerns that Slovenia brought to the organization. While certainly Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary were rightfully concerned about the perceived Russian threat, this is not seen in the efforts of Slovenia and in fact, the minister's remarks make it clear that a new representational space is being created, one that eschews the east-west viewpoint of the hegemon, the United States.

Lacking the power to convince the U.S. to compromise, Slovenia was not on the list when the Madrid Summit concluded. The country has since accepted US statements

that the process of enlargement is a continuous one, and that Slovenia is a likely front-runner for the next round of enlargement talks. Via the web, the lobbying continues. Recent additions to the foreign ministry's website indicate that Slovenia has recently approved sizable increases in defense expenditures (See note 1), in order to improve the military forces, brining it to NATO standards.

In the analysis, it is unclear what audience the Foreign Ministry attempted to reach. Available in both English and Slovenian, domestic consumption was a clear goal. International policymakers or members of their staffs might peruse the Internet as well, making them a target audience. It is clear that Minister Thaler's efforts at major diplomatic meetings were attempts to personally lobby. The electronic version of his government's arguments were also intended to have an effect on leaders but it is less clear who exactly was being lobbied. The efforts to remake strategic representations of space to insure accession will continue.

1) The webpage that announced the increased expenditures was originally on the website of the Slovenian Foreign Ministry. It has since been removed. I have not been able to find independent confirmation of this fact on Slovenian related webpages since.

EUROPEAN UNION - HOPES, ASPIRATIONS, AND STANDARDS

For any country of East Central Europe to hope for European Union membership, there are a series of standards for open and democratic society that must be met. One way of addressing one of the tests, that of religious freedom is dealt with by the Government Office for Religious Communities (Fig. 6. http://www.sigov.si/uvs/ang/aindex.htm). This site, carrying on the consistent usage of the state seal of Slovenia, aims to provide international and domestic users evidence of religious toleration. Tolerance of minorities and thus their differing religions is one of the many social standards the state will be judged on by human rights groups and governments when considering whether to admit Slovenia to the EU.

The site is of interest for several reasons. First, it provides a listing of what religious organizations are registered with the office. This is important as the number of missionary groups through East Central Europe and Eastern Europe has increased since the early 1990s. It is interesting to note that the format of the table (August 17, 1998) showed the Roman Catholic Church listed first (Figure 7). Whether this was a deliberate move on the part of the office helping to signify the Roman Catholic majority in the country or simply the function of the Roman Catholic Church registering first is unknown.

The amount of potential interaction with the office by the browser is unusual. One may access the Director's email address via the site's email link. This allows the browser to ask questions and investigate the role of the state in supporting a diversity of religions and for religious groups to

FIGURE 6

find out more information. This lends an air of transparency and access that many government sites lack.

More than social justice issues such as religion be examined. The political system will be scrutinized to ascertain the commitment to democratic elections. Evidence from the state itself is provided by the Republic Electoral Commission (Figure 8. http://www.sigov.si/elections/rvk.html). The site contains results of the elections at several scales, including the 1997 mayor's election in the capital, Ljubljana, and the 1996 and the 1992 elections for the National Assembly. While the presence of the electoral results does not insure a democratic society, it serves as a

Republic of Slovenia

Government's Office for Religious Communities

Religious communities which hold legal person status in the Republic of Slovenia

	RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY	ADDRESS	REPRESENTATIVE
1.	The Roman Catholic Church	The Archelpiscopal Ordinary's Office, Ciril Metodov trg 4, Ljubljana	dr. Franc Rode
2.	The Evangelical Church	Seniority Office, Slovenska 15, Murska Sobota	Geza Emisa
3.	The Jewish Community of Slovenia - The Jewish Community of Ljubljana	Trzaska 2, Ljubljana	Andrej Kozar
4.	The Union of Baptist Churches in the Republic of Slovenia	Janseva 1, Celje	dr. Misko Canji
5.	The Serbian Orthodox Church	Grubarjevo nabrezje 20, Ljubljana	Peran Boskovic
6.	The Islamic Religious Community in the Republic of Slovenia	Grablovlceva 14, Ljubljana	Muris Hadzibascausevic
7.	The Pentecost Church in the Republic of Slovenia	Trdinova 27, Novo Mesto	Daniel Brkic
8.	The Christian Adventist Church	Njegoseva 15, Ljubljana	Drago Marin
9.	The Jehovah's Witness - Christian Religiuous Community	Poljanska 77a, Ljubljana	Branko Presker
10.	The Christ's Church of Brothers in the Republic of Slovenia	Zickl prehod 3, Maribor	Tomo Tomovic
11.	The New Apostolic Church in the Republic of Slovenia	Glavni trg 3, Maribor	Ervin Korosec
12.	The Free Church in the Republic of Slovenia	Adamiceva 7, Celje	Ervin Pirnat
13.	The Community for Krishna Consciousness	Zibertova 27, Ljubljana	Andrej Kikelj
14.	The Liberal Catholic Church	Jamnikarjeva 1, Ljubljana	Aristid Havlicek
15.	The International School of the Golden Rosycross - Lectorium Rosicrucianum	Celovska 280, Ljubljana	Zlata Fon
16.	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Masarykova14, Ljubljana	Albin Lotric
17.	Universal Life	Glinskova polscad 16, Ljubljana	Vladko Began
18.	The Unification Church	Novosadska 8, Ljubljana	Silvo Sardi
	The National Bahai Community in the	Kuzmiceva 5,	

FIGURE 7

34

symbol of several things. First, elections are occurring and that there appears to be stability in the electoral process. Secondly, the presence of these results serves to signal browsers that Slovenia is open with election results, including local level details of results. Lastly, turnout levels are provided, perhaps intended as a surrogate for strength of democracy and civic participation among the people. All three are intended to convince the observer that Slovenia is indeed democratic.

The European Union will also require the harmonization of economic systems. Several state agencies will be involved in the transition, many of which are acting now to ease the process. One such agency is the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (Figure 9. http://www.sigov.si/zrs/index_e.html) is an agency that should be viewed as an extension of the state information apparatus. In this case, it produces raw survey data on a variety of measures (economic, social, cultural, political) for use by government and private groups that request and pay for such services. In the words of the website, it:

"provides national statistics on the current situation and movements in the economic, demographic and social spheres as well as on environmental and natural resources for bodies and organizations of public administration, the commercial sector and the general public.

The work of the Office is carried out on the principles of *neutrality, objectiveness and professional independence*. The data are obtained and made available on the basis of *scientific disclosures and professionally suitable methods. The office fulfills its international obligations by providing and exchanging statistical data with other coun-*
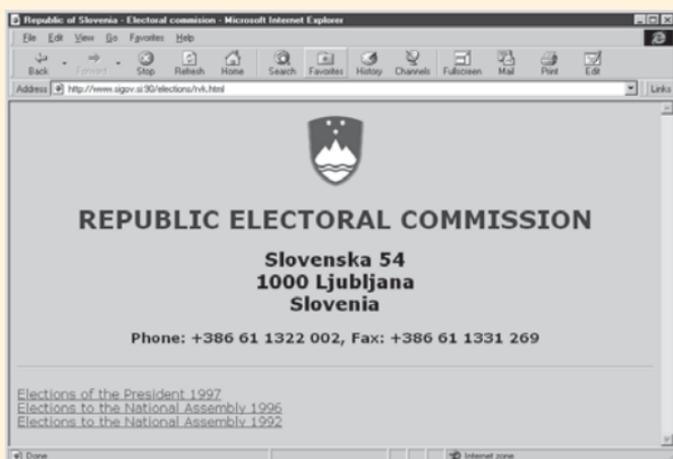
tries and international organizations." (Emphasis mine. September 10th, 1998. http://www.sigov.si/zrs/index_e.html)

While functioning as a part of the state, the office claims that objectivity and neutrality are inherent in its functions. This claim of neutrality and impartial treatment of the findings is vital to the portrayal of the state as supporting the truth. Justification of policies made on the strength of such numbers must be couched in the terms of neutrality and independence. These statements also indicate the advanced, modern approach of the state in this realm of activity. Statistics and information have been vital for the advancement of state interests for centuries, and this office attempts to position itself in such a manner as to conform with international standards and practices, in what the website terms the "Europeanization of Slovenian statistics." (Ibid.) This statement alone betrays the idea of neutral statistics, as Slovenia tries to gather them in a European fashion, so that Slovenian numbers correspond to the rest of Europe. It is from these figures, gathered in a European manner that will be used for regional compari-
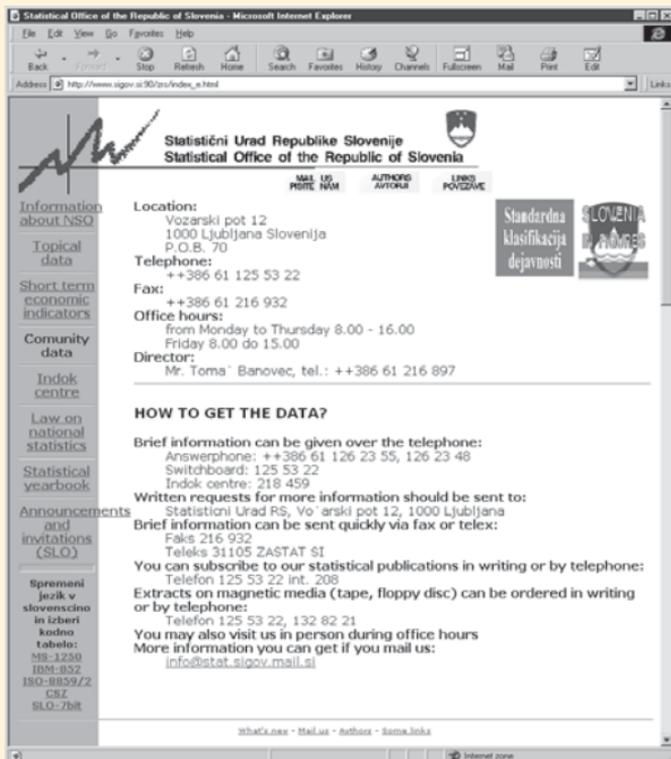
FIGURE 9

sons and justifications for Slovenia's entry into the EU. This makes the statistical office a vital, and thus political apparatus itself.

The Ministry of Finance, (Figure 10. http://www.sigov.si/mf/angl/apredmf2.html) serves a role similar to the statistical office, that of standardizing economic regulation in the country to match that of the European Union. As with the other sites, the Ministry of Finance does provide the obligatory national crest of the state, and provides a picture of the building housing the offices of the ministry. It also provides, as other sites do, a map of Ljubljana that one can locate the Ministry on.

The site's value stems from the presentation of the country as a modern capitalist state. The ministry clearly defines what the competencies are, what it does and justifies its existence in this manner. The Ministry handles issues of money laundering, tax administration, foreign exchange and gaming. The desire to compare the Slovenian effort to those of other states is evident, particular other European or advanced capitalist states such as the United States or New Zealand, Canada, or Australia. This selection also reflects the efforts of particular governments to make this information available. It should be noted that there is a link to Slovenia's neighbor Croatia and their Ministry of Finance. The links, while helpful to the browser if they are looking for comparisons, are symbolic in who is linked. At the very minimum, it displays Slovenia's desire to be linked
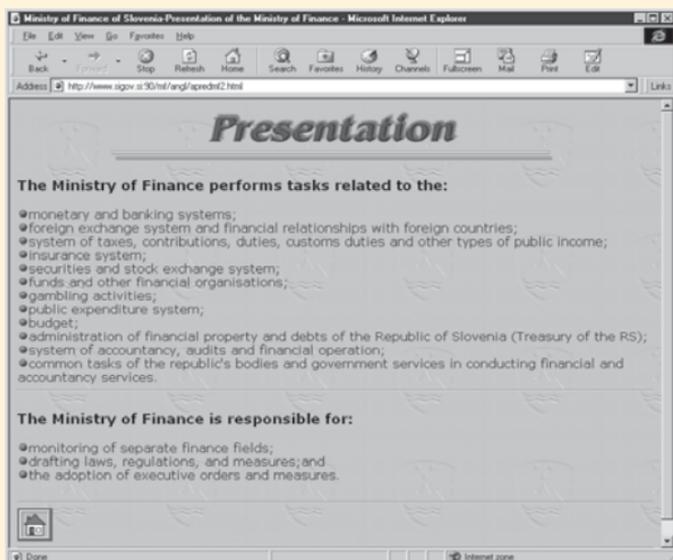
FIGURE 10

to countries Ministries of Finance with Internet presence, several of which are EU members.

The site for the Prime Minister (Figure 11. http://www.sigov.si/pvl/ang/drnovsek.html) also evidences the constant push for EU membership in government sites. The page provides a picture of the Prime Minister and relates his rise to international prominence in the international financial and governmental scenes. His rise is not overly embellished to the international observer. What is of interest is that his accomplishments are couched in terms of what he has done for the country in terms of internationalizing the country. Economic performance figures that are mentioned just happen to be the figures that the EU is using for the Maastricht Criteria. The designers are clear to point out the economic performance of the country, combined with the political and economic stability make it stand out clearly from the other Central European states. Thus, the site serves to not only introduce the PM but also argue that Slovenia and the PM are quite ready to accept the challenges of Europe.
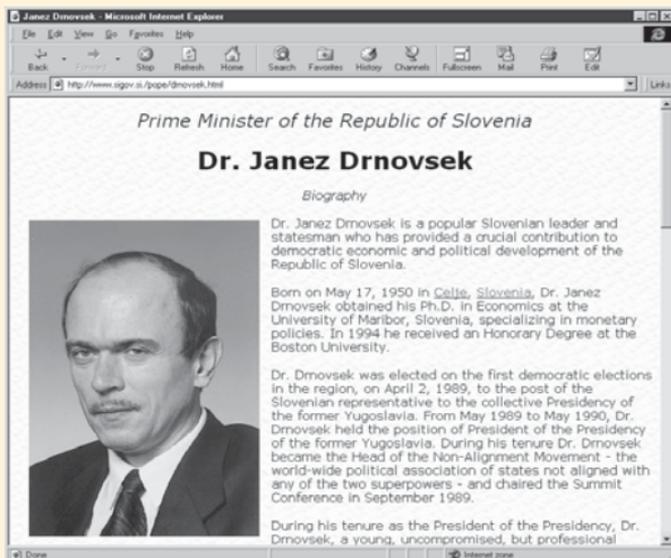
FIGURE 11

SLOVENIA – ENVIRONMENT
AND NATIONAL PARKS

The state finds itself in the position of marketing itself as a place for tourism, based on a limited natural resource base. Proximity to Austria, Italy and Germany enhance the position it holds in absolute space. However, it is widely known that environmental concerns were not the highest priority for communist governments, a legacy that must be combated in the perception of East Central Europe as an environmental nightmare. The Council for Environmental Protection (CEPRS) (Figure 12. http://www.sigov.si/svo/index1_e.htm) covers the effort to remain a "green piece of Europe" (Tourism, September 3, 1998. Figure 13. http://www.ijs.si/uvi/eng/frame.html-l2) while balancing the needs of economic development.
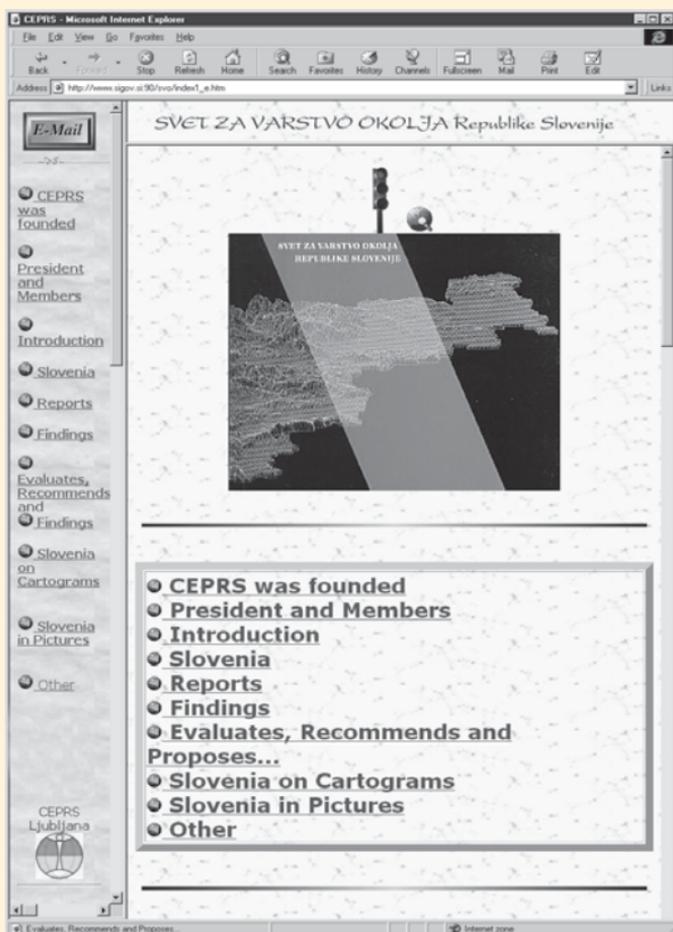
FIGURE 12

It is important to note that this site attempts to do a great deal, perhaps to the detriment of the site itself. The presence of frames displays the technical competence of the page designer (who is not identified on the page). The site demonstrates the attempts of the state to show a concern for the environment in order to help maintain the reproduction of conditions that are healthful for the populace as a whole.

However, a careful reading of the texts included in the site shows a concern about balancing industrial development with the concerns of sustainable environmental practices. This is a practical admission, with a stated goal of maintaining economic growth the country desperately needs.
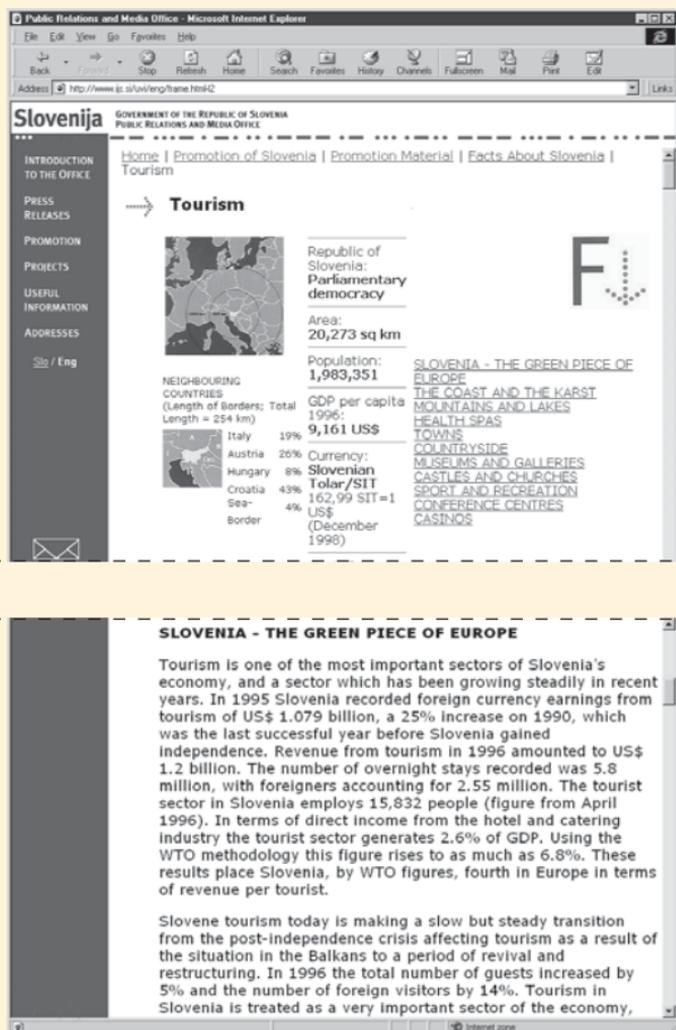
FIGURE 13

Graphically, the site also uses maps to make arguments for the protection of the environment. These maps position Slovenia in Europe (again, the issue of where Slovenia is recurs here, as seen in other government sites) along with maps that display themes of river usage, road usage by cars, and air quality issues that the state must deal with.

Much of the site is used to lay out broad generalizations that support the actions of the CEPRs, making the argument that the environment is something the state should be concerned about and is. The vast amount of information serves as a sign that the government does take steps to address environmental issues, thus protecting the populace and working to preserve the country's natural resources. This is an important part of the legitimation function of the state.

Other sites that support the green approach include a site dedicated to Triglav National Park (figure 14. http://www.sigov.si/tnp/). In keeping with other countries that are promoting tourism as a source of foreign exchange, Slovenia also promotes its most prominent park, Triglav National Park. The opening pages again situate the country on maps as being in the central part of Europe, and then situate the browser within Slovenia so that a sense of
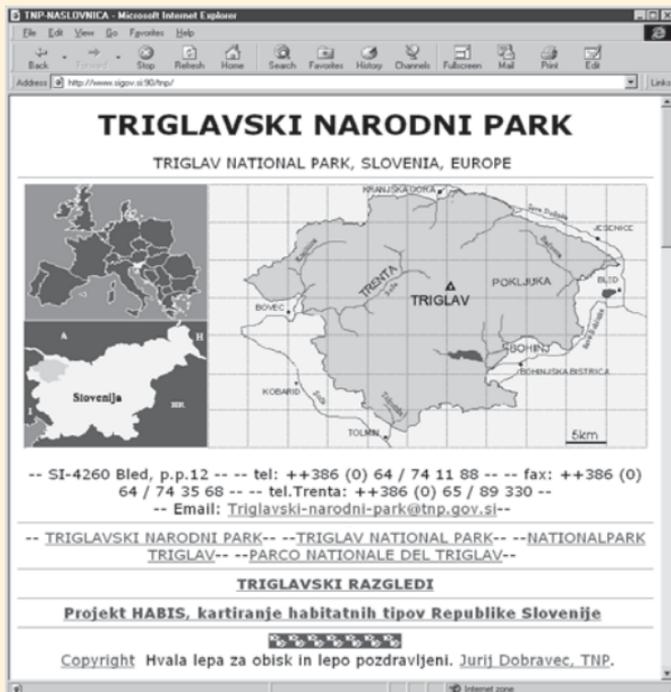
FIGURE 14

location (a real point to consider). It is marketed to multiple audiences, as the text and site is in four languages (Slovenian, English, German and Italian). The texts consists of the history of the park and the formation of it, while supporting maps provide information on the geology, the flora and the fauna of the region. It is unusual that a site devoted to a national park would be devoid of information on the tourist function, but in the English version, none is present. However, the places that are mentioned in the text are often linked to well done photographs that lay out the beauty that awaits the tourist.

TOURISM – NEW COUNTRY.
NEW MARKETING STRATEGIES

State promotion of tourism on the net as a source of FDI or of foreign currency and business growth is present, though one finds many private groups also promoting tourism in Slovenia. Two government institutions promoting tourism are the Public Relations and Media Office (PRMO) and the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB). The Public Relations and Media Office for the Republic of Slovenia (Figure 15. http://www.ijs.si/uvi/eng/frame.html-l2) does address the issue in an on-line version of the four-page fact sheets that it produces on a variety of topics related to Slovenia. The on-line brochure clearly lays out the challenge of changing how Slovenia is seen and portrayed in the representational spaces of tourists:

"Five years of independence is a short time for a country. For tourism, or the presentation of tourism to the world, and for the business world, it is hardly any time at all. Slovenia faces a number of dilemmas which are part of the legacy of Yugoslav tourism. Most significant is the question of how to market the beauties of the new independent Slovenia on the international market given that until

FIGURE 15

43
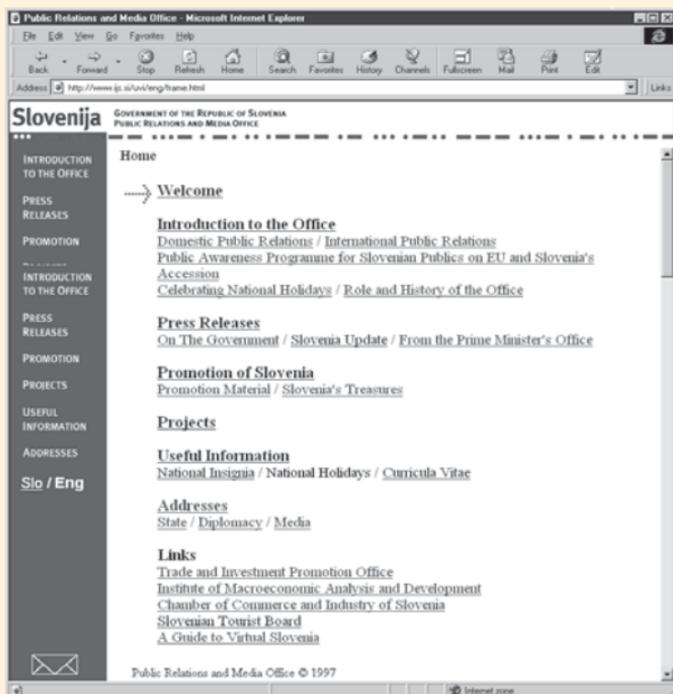
recently Slovenia was marketed as tourist destination within the broader context of Yugoslavia." ("Tourism. (http://www.ijs.si/uvi/eng/frame.html-l2) September 3rd, 1998.)

This is one of the few references to Yugoslavia found in the government sites (see above discussion on the distancing process from the term), and it is clearly in a negative context. It is one of being held back in a small market, an orientation that must be overcome in order for the Slovenian tourism industry to compete. Thus, Slovenia must define itself anew as a separate entity, one deserving of deeper exploration, to those that still envision Slovenia as part of Yugoslavia (past tourists and travel agents.) The brochure also extols the virtues or Slovenia, especially the variety of tourism opportunities based on the diverse landscapes of the country.

The Slovenian Tourist Board (Figure 16. http://www.tourist-board.si) is another government agency, charged with promoting the country in 1996. It aims promote Slovenian tourism both domestically and internationally. Additionally, it defines its mission as:

"to promote Slovenia as a country with a clear and distinctive identity and clearly defined comparative and competitive advantages and thereby assist the Slovene economy by marketing Slovene tourism in

FIGURE 16

a concrete manner. (September 3rd, 1998, http://www.tourst-board.si.).

This echoes the statement of the Media Relations brochure, in that Slovenia is not well known, and suffers from a lack of differentiation from the neighboring countries. Statements regarding the purpose and vision of the board clearly stake out the role of national promoter. The board can "make a major contribution to the development of tourism since it links all Slovene tourist organizations and those involved in the promotion of Slovenia with the goal of achieving their harmonious and efficient operation." (September 3rd, 1998 . http://www.tourist-board.si.)

A realistic acknowledgement of the conditions that Slovenia steps into by competing is present, as the state evaluates the tourism potential of the country. The Board understands the importance of tourism to the economy and European market it competes in. It also acknowledges the fact that it now competes against other East Central European countries such as Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland to name a few.

Defining the location of the country is a major part of the site. In fact, one may click on a link from the first page that is titled, Position of Slovenia, which provides the distances from the country to major Central European cities (Salzburg, Vienna, Munich, Budapest) and does provide an outline map of the country, noting the countries that border it. Maps, CD-ROMs, and guides for tourists and travel agents are available via the Internet, which provide further opportunities for the Board to define Slovenia for tourists.

The Tourism Board site is aimed more at the person or business looking for tourism support. There are links that will take a person to well designed but private sites such as the Guide to Virtual Slovenia (http://www.ijs.si/slo/) that contain many links to individual cities and attractions, but even these are privately done as well. Many of these webpages are created by an individual that takes pride in the town, are not intended to support the tourism industry per se..

Additionally, the site performs an information function, defining what constitutes a tourism product, or a characteristic tourism area. The planned promotion activities by the agency such as participation in tourism fairs are also listed (though it should be noted, the list was for 1997, no update was found.) It serves to inform the international browser about the increasing professionalism in the indus-

try and the opportunity for tourism in Slovenia. Additionally, the pages function provide resources for those domestic browsers that would like to participate in developing Slovenian tourism. Despite the multiple audiences of tourists, tourist agents, and professionals, the site provides what other government sites provide, a clear demarcation of the country and an argument for the relative proximity of the country to its markets. Given the nature of tourism, this process of image definition on the tourist's mental map is vital for economic success. Tourism is not the only part of the economy that relies on particular representations of space. The attraction of foreign investment capital depends on perceptions, perceptions that a state will try and manipulate. This is addressed in the next section.

SLOVENIA - OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Slovenia is a competitor in the game of attracting for-eign direct investment (FDI.) It is disadvantaged in some ways but advantaged in others. Outside perceptions of these attributes make the representations of space important. In a globalized economy, Deibert points to the idea that many companies are applying "local globalization" (Deibert, 1997), expanding the markets they attract from via communica-tions technology. Through the Internet, Slovenia's Trade and Industry Promotion Office attempts a similar strategy for FDI and expansion of markets. It accomplishes this by extolling the attributes that would be valuable for foreign capital.

Slovenia is a member of the Central European Free Trade Area, but desires European Union membership at the earliest possible date. The country has a major port facility in Koper, which currently dominates the neighboring ports of Trieste and Rijeka (in Italy and Croatia respectively.) Slovenia was fortunate to have been one the most industrially advanced republics of Former Yugosla-via, and from this has a base of fixed and human capital that may be exploited. Links with neighboring capitalist countries have also contributed to the relatively developed position in the European and global economy, particularly the relationships with Germany, Austria and Italy.

The government is clearly involved in the promotion of Slovenia as a place of investment. The Ministry of Economic Relations and Development maintains a site (http://www.sigov.si/meor/index.htm) that is very underdeveloped. Basic addresses for contact people in specific departments are provided, but little else. The TIPO pages stand out along with those of the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD) (http://www.sigov.si/zmar/index.html) and the Office of Consumer protection (http://www.sigov.si/uvp/index.htm) albeit, the latter is only available in Slovenian. These three sites are the most developed, and the TIPO and IMAD sites are in multiple languages.

The Trade and Investment Promotion office (TIPO) (Figure 17. http://www.sigov.si/tipo/eng/mmenu.html) states the goal of the office and website. TIPO encourages FDI through a variety of means, including the provision of information on investment opportunities in the country, financial assistance, promotional programs, business con-sulting services, and the maintenance of a database of prime locations in the country. Of interest is the fact that on the

entry page, a preference for greenfield, so-called environ-
mentally friendly industry is stated (Figure 17). This
counters the image of Eastern Europe as an environmental
wasteland as a result of Communist industrial practices.

TIPO carves out a specific representation of Slovenian
economic spaces by appropriating various layers of the
palimpsest that is current Slovenian economic geography.
This can be on a page titled "7 Good Reasons for Investing
in Slovenia." (Figure 18, http://www.sigov.si/tipo/eng/
1001c.html.) Oddly enough, for a country trying to eschew
the Balkan identity in the geopolitical realm, the linkages
to former Yugoslavia (recovering and potential markets)
are portrayed as a positive point, along with the historical
links to other Central and Eastern European states. The
portrayal of proximity to the states of former Yugoslavia is
an varying one, negative in most contexts and positive
specific ones, as demonstrated here.

The "relatively high management and technical/tech-
nological (sic) expertise," which is attributed to the, "long
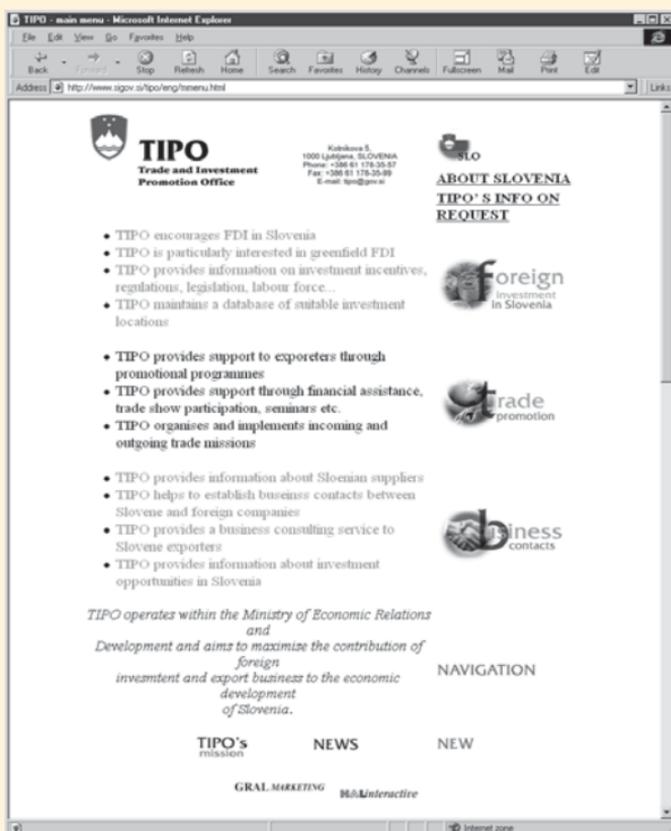
FIGURE 17

exposure to a quasi-market system" hearkens back to the
Yugoslavian economic experiments in greater local con-
trol of industry during the 1970s. Higher GDP figures than
in countries such as Czech Republic and Hungary are cited
to indicate greater purchasing power of the population, one
that is familiar with Western companies that have "estab-
lished market shares" in the country. It is to be noted that
the relatively central position of Slovenia, as represented
on several maps on the government website, is also a posi-
tive aspect. This centrality is exploitable through infra-
structure such as the port of Koper, the proximity to coun-
tries that are major investor states (Austria and Italy), and
solid transport connections to Europe as a whole allow for-
eign investors locating in Slovenia to use the country as
an "export base for third countries." (ibid.)

Other pages cite the "Liberal Foreign Investment Regu-
lations" (Figure 19. http://www.sigov.si/tipo/eng/
1001a.html) and provide a list of major FDI investors (Coca-
Cola, Siemens, Bosch, Bayer, Renault for example) as ma-

jor companies in Slovenia. Not wishing to deter smaller investors, the site indicates that the, "average foreign investor... is a small to medium-sized company from one of the near European Union countries which are Slovenia's major trading partners." (Figure 20. http://www.sigov.si/tipo/eng/1001b.html)
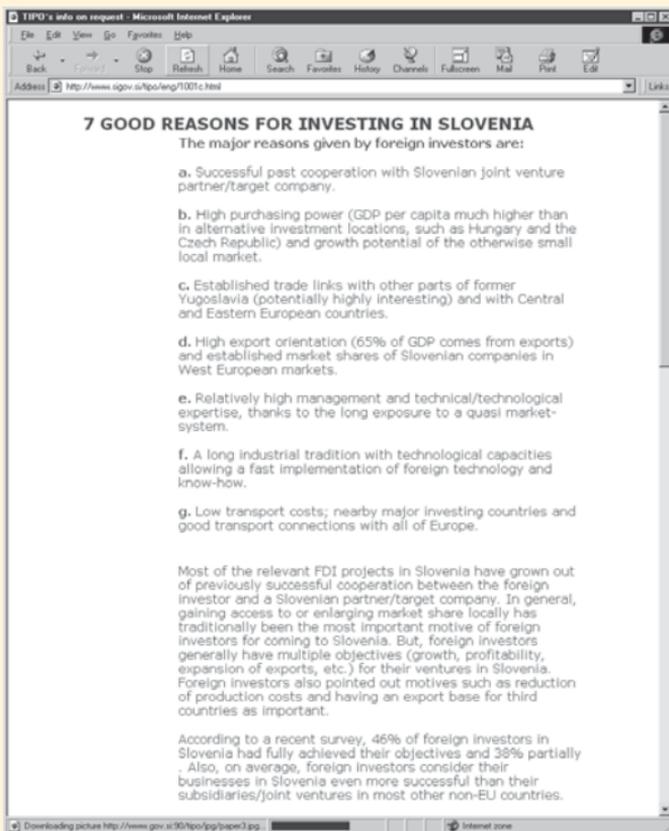
One finds complete information about the cost of basic utilities in Slovenia (Figure 21. http://www.sigov.si/tipo/eng/10071.html), calculated in German Marks and Slovenian tolars, along with recent interest rates and average gross salaries for Slovenian workers so that labor and construction costs may be calculated. The browser will also note that the TIPO webpages have an abbreviated version of history, titled "A Long History in Seconds," which skips from the 6th century, to the 9th, to 1551 and then to 1848 in a matter of four bullet points marking dates in time. The entire history is given in eleven bullet points, perfect for busy executives who care only about the cost of doing business in a place they know little about (Figure 22. http:/
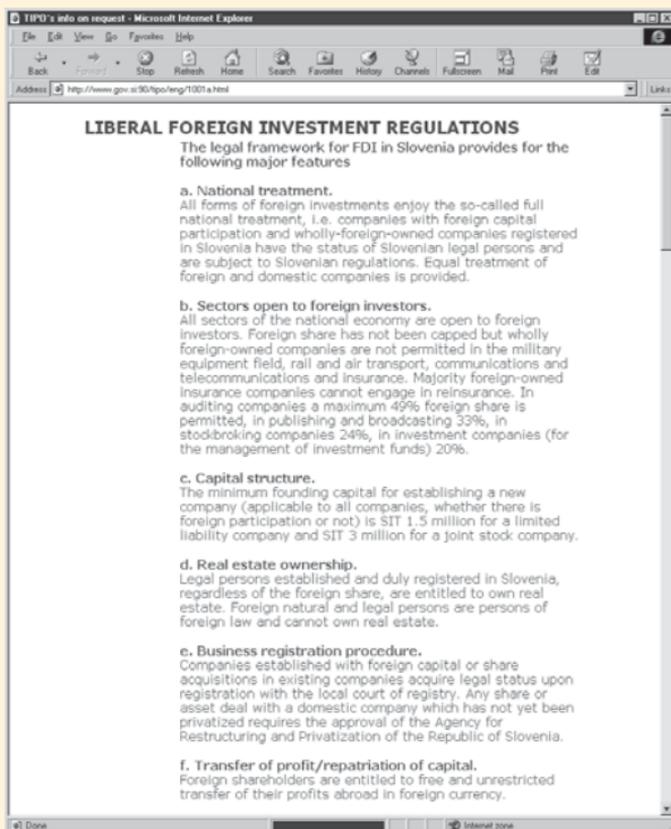

FIGURE 19

/www.sigov.si/tipo/eng/0905.html).

The IMAD site aims to provide economic analysis and data for forecasting purposes. Analysis of development plans, proposal of development plans, and budgetary memorandums are all under the purview of IMAD. It, along with TIPO, serves as a visible sign of economic competence in the government sector. IMAD provides some legitimacy for the state as it prepares to enter into negotiations with the EU, indicating that the government does forecast , does project, and attempts to guide development. IMAD will analyze the effects of specific policies on Slovenia and sug-

FIGURE 20

gest ways in which preparations may be made to lessen the problems of accession.

Attracting FDI not only means creating a representational space that appears business friendly in regards to labor costs and relative position to markets. It also includes the spaces of regulation, so that standards and copyrights are respected as state boundaries are transgressed. The issues of intellectual property, patent protection, and trademarks all loom as important issues, markers that a country has the potential to be a good trading partner with major trading countries. Countries such as China that do little to stop copyright infringement are not seen in as positive a light.

The Slovenian Intellectual Property Office (Figure 23. http://www.sipo.mzt.si/GLAVAGB.htm) serves as the infor-

SUMMARY

The following summarises the main costs that an investor might find useful. All values are August 1997 except where mentioned differently.

Values:	in SIT	in DM
ELECTRICITY (price per kWh)		
- high tariff	17,66	0,19
- low tariff	10,38	0,11
GAS (price per m³)	48,82	0,54
WATER SUPPLY (price per m³)		
Cold water	190,96	2,10
Warm water	309,26	3,41
LITTER REMOVAL (price per m² of dwelling per month)	13,94	0,15
FUEL (retail price per litre)		
- Petrol (98 octane)	102,50	1,09
- Petrol non-leaded (95 octane)	94,40	1,00
- Diesel	86,20	0,92
- Heating oil	47,60	0,51
HEATING (price per MWh)	4.633,66	51,03
INTEREST RATES (annual interest rate)- *June 1997*		
LOANS (r)		
- Short-term	10,0%	
- Long-term	11,3%	
AVERAGE GROSS SALARY (industry) - **April 1997**	121.058	1.326
Exchange rate:	SIT 93,25 =	DM 1

Notes:

- r - real interest rates (above inflation),
- n - nominal interest rates (real + inflation),
- r(D) - interest rates for foreign currency,
- average gross salary is valid for August.

FIGURE 21

mation source for these legal issues. The complete law on intellectual property may be found on this site, translated into English. The office itself is a part of the Ministry of Science and Technology (Figure 24. http://www.mzt.si/mzt/mzt.html), which also houses the Standards and Metrology Institute. This office is concerned with:

"(the establishment and functioning of national services for standardization, metrology, accreditation and type approval of vehicles. The aim is also to communicate the information collected at the international level to interested parties in the Slovenian economic sphere. The issuing and adopting of *international regulations and standards as Slovenian documents provides a basis for the compatibility of the Slovenian economy and its integration into the international sphere.*" (Emphasis mine. From Basic Information http://www.usm.mzt.si/BasicInfo.htm, September 3, 1998)

The office's strategic role, as facilitator of international capital and industry standards, is couched in terms of being a building block for Slovenian integration into the international economy. This sign serves as yet another marker that Slovenia is open for business, and plays by the same rules that govern international trade elsewhere.

It is interesting to note that a nod to Slovenian na-
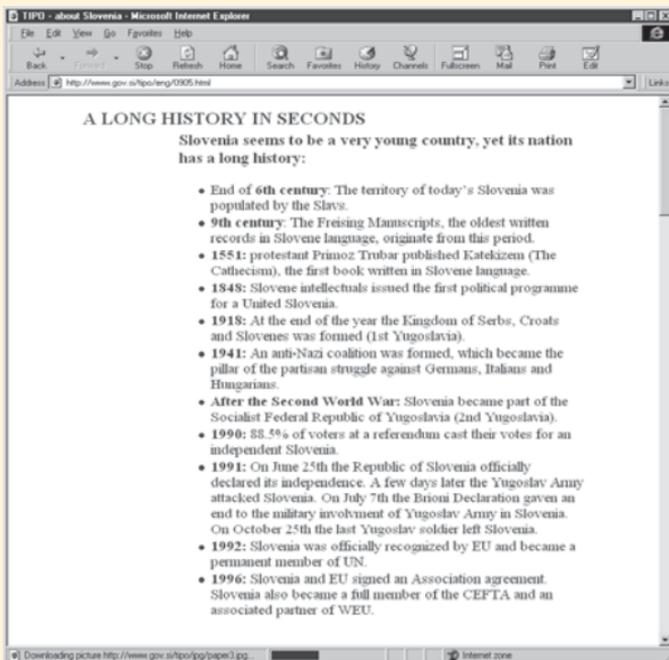
FIGURE 22

tionalism is reflected on this page. It is a page ostensibly serving to signal an internationalization of standards and procedures, but addressing a fear regarding a loss of some potential Slovenian way of doing things. The following statement from the site indicates that standardization and accession to international standards does not equal a lost of cultural distinctness.

"In view of its new status of a state, and of the old threats, "small" Slovenia is particularly sensitive to all these things. It has a fine opportunity to take into consideration the internationally recognized codes of good practice, rules, standards and regulations, and at the same time also to identify its own uniqueness. It is an advantage of the small to be able to act dynamically, inwards as well as outwards: they can adapt themselves without at the same time losing their basic characteristic – their special measures - which preserved them in relation to the big." (From Basic Information http://www.usm.mzt.si/BasicInfo.htm, September 3, 1998)

These concerns must be addressed by policy makers, so that those who change the way things are done succeed over those who would continue in traditional modes of practice, practices that outsiders would see as barriers to investment and productivity.

FIGURE 23

FIGURE 24

ANALYSIS

The state websites are but one tool for the creation of strategic representations of space. As argued elsewhere though, there are reasons entities choose websites as an additional tool for promotion that may serve their interests in differing contexts (Jackson and Purcell, 1997). This requires a specific knowledge or at least perception of the audience that will be viewing the sites. Slovenia has chosen to use the www as a platform to provide information and services to the domestic population and as a space for lobbying the international browser holding posts in business and policy.

The approach of linking Slovenia and Europe is not subtle, as the sites attempt to naturalize the idea of Slovenia as an integral part of Europe, culturally, strategically, economically, and even cartographically (maps do not lie?). It is of interest that no argument against past incorporation is provided, perhaps left out to avoid the appearance of unbridled nationalism. The sites contain no mention of the terms Balkan, or Yugoslavia unless it is to demarcate the break from the entity in 1991 or to position Slovenia as a staging ground for exploitation of the successor states. This position of staging ground implies several things. First, Slovenia is linked to Europe as a point of exploitation for the east. Simultaneously, it is creates the image an outpost of Europe facing the economic frontier. The pages are part and parcel of a differentiation process that aligns Slovenia with Europe through cartographic or textual means.

Employing the representational spaces of the Foreign Ministry pages, Slovenia waged an effort to counter hegemonic discourse and deploy the limited geopower (the ability to shape geopolitical discourse) it possessed via communications technology. (O'Tuathail, 1996.) What group the Ministry was aiming the pages for is not definite, but may be speculated upon. Those interested in the NATO expansion would find these pages an interesting challenge to the view of the United States, but it would have been one of several opinions supporting Slovenia's accession. The www is one space where the two countries might meet on anything that resembled an equal footing. Whether it was journalists, policymakers, or casual browsers, the English language information was aimed to convince the audience of Slovenia's NATO worthiness.

Business interests are well served by the Slovenian state.

The pages analyzed map a Slovenia that is business friendly, with strategic advantages that are ready for exploitation. Preferences for a type of investment (greenfield or environmentally friendly) were also demonstrated. Whether this was a requirement by a local Green party or if there is a state commitment to balancing the needs of business with those of the environment and tourism is unclear. Information on the realities of costs in Slovenia may make Slovenia a more attractive option for investors. Yet the Slovenian state realizes that it is competition for jobs, thus the pages provide information on how Slovenia compares to neighbors to the east with lower wage scales and advertises the well trained human capital within the borders. Including the names of major companies that have invested in Slovenia serves as signal that the conditions for capital accumulation are stable enough for major players to invest in the country. The point is important as Slovenia describes the majority of FDI as the result of small to medium size firms from neighboring countries investing. These companies with fewer resources may require a greater sense of security, taken from the fact that larger corporations are on the ground.

Additionally, the state needs to create the perception that not only is it European in location and strategic value, but is European in economic as well social, environmental, and political standards. The sites examined here are full of words that connote positive images of the country. Evidence put forth on the sites displays an effort to harmonize economic, social, and cultural policies with EU policies is present. These are images that would compare favorably with current EU membership and are intended to push Slovenia ahead of other applicants.

Lastly, the projection of tourism in Slovenia is tied to the issue of perception most strongly. Perceptions of proximity, ease of travel, available tourist resources and attractions are major components of sites supporting tourism. The symbols, signs, words, and maps all combine to establish an identity in the mental maps of the potential tourist or travel agent.

What unifies these sites as a whole is the state driven efforts to accomplish several goals. First, the state sites carve out new *representations of space* by defining where Slovenia is, the relative position of the state, and establishing the fact that it is an integral part of Europe. Second, by changing the representations, the *representational spaces* of the in-

dividual in their appropriation of national symbols, landscapes, and cultural signs that they act upon. Lastly, the state sites aim to influence *spatial practices* in terms of investment and tourism by shaping the representations of space individuals act upon. The sites work at accomplishing all three in order to have the material effects of increased recognition, trade, investment, tourism, and self-identity.

The three spaces that I have been concerned with must be placed in the context in which they are formed. The signs present in the sites connote identity and information that is useful in several semantic fields. For the international capitalist, terms may indicate cheap labor while to the designer the same terms imply opportunities for employment, or for the members of the ruling party, economic prosperity that will translate to reelection in 2001.

CONCLUSION

The state has appropriated cyberspace, not just in its regulation but in strategic use of it to promote specific imagery. These representations and representational spaces are resources that Slovenia will strategically deploy to meet state specific goals. This paper has argued that strategic use of information technology is not new, that there are specific reasons for the state to employ information technology in arenas besides defense, and that there are methods available to researchers to contextualize and enhance our understanding of webpage usage by states.

More importantly, this paper contributes to our understanding of how information technology is used to resist hegemonic worldviews, and how they may be challenged through the deployment of these technologies. States and social groups that are marginalized have a structure that is capable of supporting resistance. They will employ it if the technology appears to facilitate the realization of specific goals, but the efforts are not always successes.

Of methodological concern is the effect of what I will term, "the objective view' of the researcher. It does not exist. This analysis has taken place in a western country, on a color screen and printer, and was performed by a researcher who has seen the place described. These biases certainly affect the research outcome. Without a way of corroborating how these images are consumed, textual analysis requires a method that allows the researcher to demonstrate at the least, an informed perception of the contexts and ideologies in which the texts are created. Socio-semiotics addresses this issue, and may be employed to set the stage for field work that accounts for those who design pages, who consume them in various spatial contexts, and who live in the places whose image is being constructed.

The spaces constructed via the World Wide Web are not solely sites of resistance, demonstrated by the presence of states with a strong presence in cyberspace. This medium theoretically allows for more equality in communication, differentiation in the browser's mind coming from force of argument and the presence of bells and whistles that may enhance or detract from the message. However, resistance is still present in information technology, just as there are other forms of resistance available at individual and organizational levels. The point is though, the resist-

ance is not always in the form of a non-state entity, that states resist the cyber- hegemony of a hegemon as well. This article demonstrates that not only do Mexican revolutionaries such as the Zapatistas appropriate cyberspace, but so do states such as Slovenia. They too need to carve out spaces of resistance via the new media.

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