Are the Three Biggest Internet Mysteries Actually Related?

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Everyone loves a mystery, and the Internet has more than its fair share. They appeal to our human thirst for knowledge and our dislike of an unfinished story. That's why everyone loved the TV show *Lost*, and also why everyone hated the TV show *Lost*.

The following are widely regarded as the Internet's biggest unsolved mysteries. And they're not the ramblings of a drunk conspiracy nut, either. These are very real, very well documented, and very well-funded campaigns of intrigue and at least one has actually changed the world.

So put on your thinking caps and ask yourself: 'What the fudge is going on here?'

Top secret government conspiracy or Internet trolls? It's probably the trolls.

The Markovian Parallax Denigrate Is the First Internet Mystery

Let's start before the beginning, back in the days when people would argue for hours and opinions delivered with a loud voice were considered fact — yes, we're talking of a time before Tim Berners-Lee gave us the worldwide web.

In this crazy world, there used to exist an Internet community called Usenet. It was, in essence, a chat forum, and it behaved exactly like all Internet chat forums do: there were huge flame wars, trolls, incendiary posts, and liberal smatterings of Godwin's Law. Then, on a warm August day in 1996, the status quo was interrupted by a mysterious mass spamfest.

Hundreds of posts titled "Markovian Parallax Denigrate" flooded the forum. The contents of each initially appeared to be gibberish, but they kept coming until one user stated it reached "an almost transcendent level of bizarre".

Many of the early Internet adopters were of the scientific mind, given that the Internet was not as accessible as it is now, and they were hugely intrigued by these strange posts that looked like they were written in some type of code. Yet no one managed to work out what the messages meant.

With no answers forthcoming, the event was all but forgotten, until 2006, when a Wikipedia page concerning the event breathed new life into the mystery. A new generation of Internet sleuths tried to crack the mystery, but they all failed too.

Today, only one message with a subject line that reads "Markovian Parallax Denigrate" still exists in Google's archives:

*"jitterbugging McKinley Abe break Newtonian inferring caw update Cohen
air collaborate rue sportswriting rococo invocate tousle shadflower
Debby Stirling pathogenesis escritoire adventitious novo ITT most
chairperson Dwight Hertzog different pinpoint dunk McKinley pendant
firelight Uranus episodic medicine ditty craggy flogging variac
brotherhood Webb impromptu file countenance inheritance cohesion
refrigerate morphine napkin inland Janeiro nameable yearbook hark"*

And here's where it gets even weirder: The name on the sender's email, Susan Lindauer, is a former journalist who

was arrested in 2004 after allegedly serving as an agent of Saddam Hussein's government.

No one has ever gotten to the bottom of it. Was it a modern day numbers station? It's anyone's guess – but it's still not the biggest cryptographic mystery on the Internet. That belongs to:

Cicada 3301 – the Top Secret Internet Treasure Hunt

Cicada 3301 is arguably the most mysterious of all Internet mysteries.

It all started on January 5th, 2012 when an anonymous 4chan user posted this peculiar message on the random (/b/) board. It reads:

> *"Hello. We are looking for highly intelligent individuals. To find them, we have devised a test. There is a message hidden in this image. Find it, and it will lead you on the road to finding us. We look forward to meeting the few that will make it all the way through. Good luck. 3301"*

Hidden in the image of the bug is a location to another puzzle, which leads to another puzzle, which leads to another… and so on.

A similar message has popped up every year since 2012, usually around January 5th. What makes this different from the Markovian Parallax Denigrate, though, is the fact that this has been solved — in a sense. There's a whole wiki community dedicated to the conundrum, in which people help each other solve the cryptic riddles. The solutions are extremely complex and very far afield, some located in actual physical locations dotted around the planet. This implies the Cicada 3301 challenge is run by someone (or something) with considerable influence and resources.

But the *really* strange part of the Cicada 3301 mystery is that the very few who successfully solve all the puzzles simply vanish from the Internet. Even those who have been happy to document their journey every step of the way, when they get to the end they just disappear. No more posts, no more solutions. Nothing. One leaked email did show up, but it's unclear if it's genuine.

And so it remains a perplexing enigma. Why do the code-cracking super sleuths who solve the Cicada 3301 puzzle just drop off the map? What happens next? What becomes of these genius minds?

No one knows…

However, there have been many quiet rumours connecting Cicada 3301 to Bitcoin — heightened by the fact they both appeared around the same time and are both heavily based on cryptography.

Cicada 3301 and Bitcoin also share an unknown origin story, totally unheard of in such a shared, digital age. Which leads us nicely on to the entry:

Is this Satoshi Nakamoto? No. It's a stock image of a man on a computer with no face.

Who Is Bitcoin Inventor, Satoshi Nakamoto?

Satoshi Nakamoto invented the Bitcoin protocol, publishing a paper via the Cryptography Mailing List in November 2008, yet no one knows who he or she is. Or even if it's just one person or the name of a group. All we know for certain is that Satoshi Nakamoto is not a real name. It's a top secret identity.

An extra bit of spice to add to the intrigue is the addition of unbridled wealth. Satoshi is known to be sitting on a million Bitcoins, with a current estimated worth of US$400m, but has been valued as high as US$1 billion in the past. Strangely, the million Bitcoins have never been touched, and have come to be known as the 'Bitcoin billion'.

Before disappearing completely, Nakamoto's last words on the Bitcoin forum (where he was a sporadic, but regular poster) were innocuous enough, just mentioning a new DoS build.

Nakamoto worked with many people on Bitcoin's open-source team but took care never to reveal anything personal about himself. The last anyone heard from him was in the spring of 2011, when he said that he had "moved on to other things."

But who was he and where did he come from? Nakamoto just appeared one day, invented a new global currency, then vanished. Could one person really do that by themselves? And why does he not want all that money? It's all very strange.

Recently *Wired* ran an expose, claiming that an Australian guy called Craig Wright is Satoshi Nakamoto. But inconsistencies and lies about his past, plus an ongoing court case with the Aussie tax man – who straight up refute Wright's claim – have cast doubt on it. *Wired* even wrote a follow-up piece, stating they had probably been hoaxed.

Who's behind the Mysteries of the Internet?

Could all three be related? If so, who's behind them? The CIA, the go-to bad guy of the Internet, has been cited in all three cases, and they would certainly have the resources to put it all together. Unfortunately, there may well never be a conclusive answer.

These mysteries are not just random conspiracy theories; they are things that actually happened, and were orchestrated by real people (or groups). But who! WHO? **TELL US!**

Do you have you any idea what's going on? Please leave it in the comments below!

Featured image: retrostar / Dollar Photo Club
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Definitely not Satoshi Nakamoto: Tiko Aramyan / Dollar Photo Club