

Plan X: US Military views all social space as Battlefields

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The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (known as DARPA), the cyber-security arm of the Pentagon, has visions of building the cyberspace equivalent of an 'armored tank' to engage on the global battlefield of digital warfare, according to a report today by the Washington Post. The previously unreported on project has been dubbed 'Plan X' and would be the most ambitious cyberwarfare project yet initiated by the US military.

"If they can do it, it's a really big deal," Herbert S. Lin, a cybersecurity expert with the National Research Council of the National Academies, told the Post. "If they achieve it, they're talking about being able to dominate the digital battlefield just like they do the traditional battlefield."

"Officials say this would be the cyberspace equivalent of an armored tank."

According to the report, the five-year, \$110 million research program will have as one of its main goals the "creation of an advanced map that details the entirety of cyberspace — a global domain that includes tens of billions of computers and other devices — and updates itself continuously. Such a map would help commanders identify targets and disable them using computer code delivered through the Internet or other means."

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Washington Post: With Plan X, Pentagon seeks to spread U.S. military might to cyberspace

The five-year, \$110 million research program will begin seeking proposals this summer. Among the goals will be the creation of an advanced map that details the entirety of cyberspace — a global domain that includes tens of billions of computers and other devices — and updates itself continuously. Such a map would help commanders identify targets and disable them using computer code delivered through the Internet or other means.

Another goal is the creation of a robust operating system capable of launching attacks and surviving counterattacks. Officials say this would be the cyberspace equivalent of an armored tank; they compare existing computer operating systems to sport-utility vehicles — well suited to peaceful highways but too vulnerable to work on battlefields.

The architects of Plan X also hope to develop systems that could give commanders the ability to carry out speed-of-light attacks and counterattacks using preplanned scenarios that do not involve human operators manually typing in code — a process considered much too slow.

[...]

Plan X also envisions the development of technology that enables a commander to plan, launch and control cyberattacks.

A commander wanting to hit a computer that controls a target — a strategically important

drawbridge in enemy territory, for example — should be able to predict and quantify battle damage while considering the timing or other constraints on a possible attack, said Dan Roelker, Plan X program manager.

Cyberwar experts worry about unintended consequences of attacks that might damage the flow of electricity to civilian homes or hospitals. A targeting system also should allow operators to stop a strike or reroute it before it damages systems that are not targeted — a fail-safe mechanism that experts say would be very difficult to engineer.

DARPA will not prescribe what should be represented on the digital map.

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/05/31-0>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-3279.html>