

## Back to the *EtherNet*?

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Not so long after ecological, social and economical worries about transportation, communication technology has married with distributed information management to offer private and professional customers the needed facilities to reduce the 00's "hopping syndrome". The joint increase of wired and wireless, communication bandwidth, static and mobile network coverage, computing power and drastic decrease storage and device costs have greatly facilitated all aspects of the new no-origin way of multimedia management, the so-called Vaporous Net. Where exchanges were required to share data and information because of its once fixed location, the ideas of exploded and distributed data all over usage vicinities make it feasible to access it easily from any location.

Initially officially supported by the GRID network and less officially by P2P networks, the V-Net has smoothly overlaid the classical Web. Data is no longer stuck into storage facilities but truly lives over networks. Just come with your personal tag and... "welcome home!", your favorite data just groups in front of you in seconds. How about applications? Again, now well-established Web 2.0 technologies have made applications just some more data to access.

Having access to any data equally easily means being everywhere at the same time, in old standards. Hence, V-Net has made distant presence has easy and natural has could be. As a paradox, data is distributed but from a user perspective, information groups into a one-point location. Is it becoming a black hole?

Professional would surely answer negatively. Net-based activity (Net-meetings, telepresence, remote working,...) is made very natural by the V-Net (security is, as always, a challenge). It has become a ubiquitous communication channel allowing the logging and processing of all exchanges.

But the V-Net has also benefited individual users. The expansion of community spaces has joined the growing interest of users for multimedia. Sharing pictures, life recordings (a.k.a e-motions), and any other data is straightforward, just make it enter the V-Net.

And that's not just all of it. Many players have had to adapt their technology to the V-Net context. The major being search engines. How to retrieve information within this mass of volatile and location-less data? Evolving from P2P-IR, novel indexing structures have spawned and demonstrated their efficiency. Better, they have been the main driving forces to understand how data should live over the network.

In turn, swift and direct access to any data has allowed new ways of perceiving data. Querying is just looking for one piece of data. Why being so limited when any piece of data is equally easy to access? Go navigation! New tangible and body-based interfaces have materialized the V-Net and open new collaborative ways of working with data.

Can we expect more? Of course, good technology should by nature be discreet. Looking back, the WWW and then the V-Net are just steps to facilitate communication, simply forgetting about distances. The once good idea of virtual spaces with avatars is turning into a ubiquitous communication space pinching space wherever needed. Smart management tools will be our guides within the *Ether*.