Superdistribution: An Electronic Infrastructure for the Economy of the Future

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presented by Birgit Kaschte
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Summary

- This paper discusses the concept of superdistribution and gives a short overview about its history.
- It also explains why superdistribution is not yet realized and why the authors think that it will definitely be the distribution concept for digital information in the future.

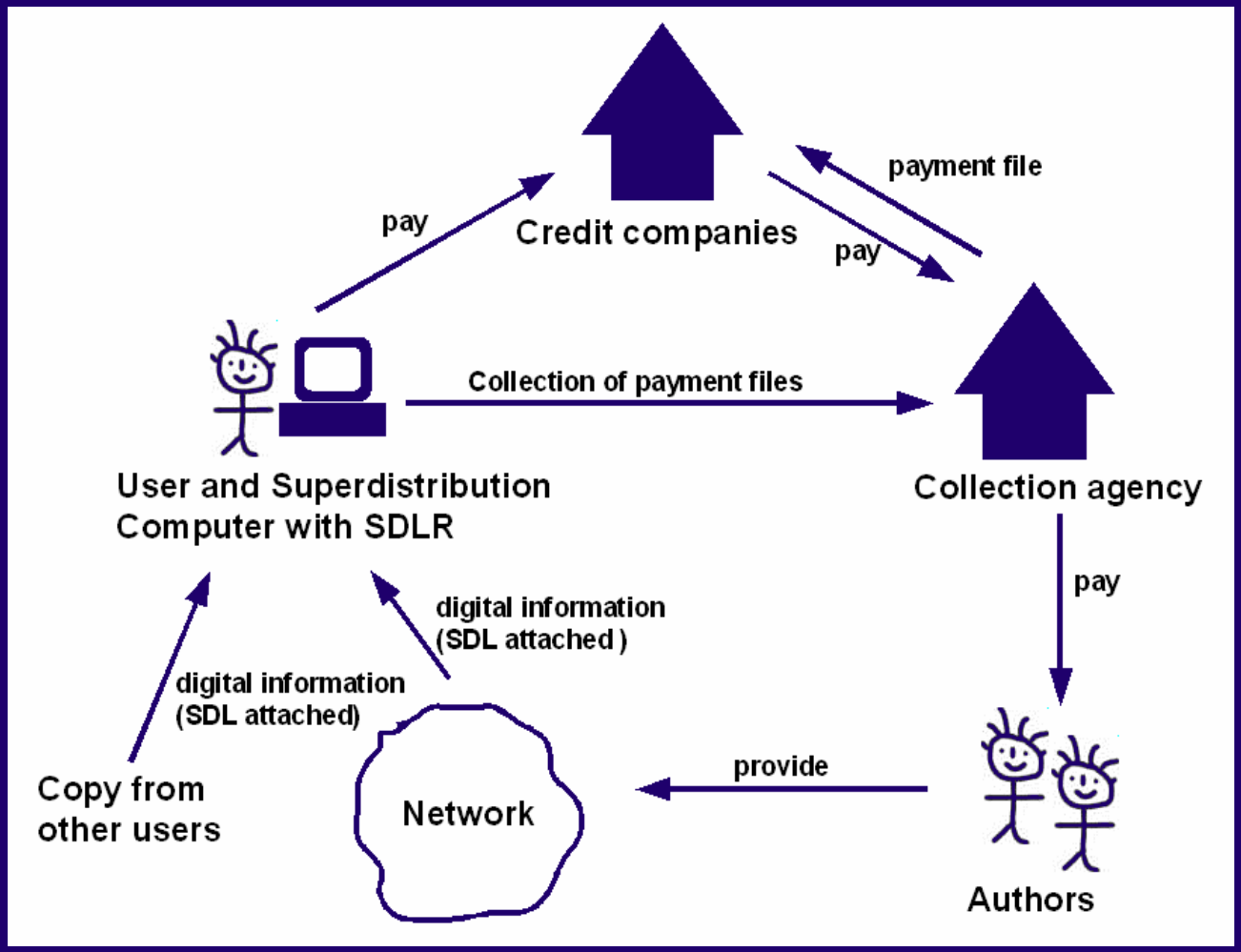
Critical comments

- The authors shortly mentioned two prototypes implemented in 1986 and 1989. This article was published in 1997. What did they do between 1989 and publishing the article in 1997?
  It would have been interesting to get more information about any more recent implementations.
- They explain superdistribution very well, but the diagrams they use are a bit confusing.

What is superdistribution?

"Superdistribution is an approach to distributing digital information, in which digital information in all its varieties [...] is distributed in a protected form and is freely available at little or no cost. Furthermore, the information can be redistributed without restrictions, and superdistribution ensure that information publishers are paid for the use of their product."

What is superdistribution?



- Enforce terms & conditions attached to information
- Collection and processing of usage records

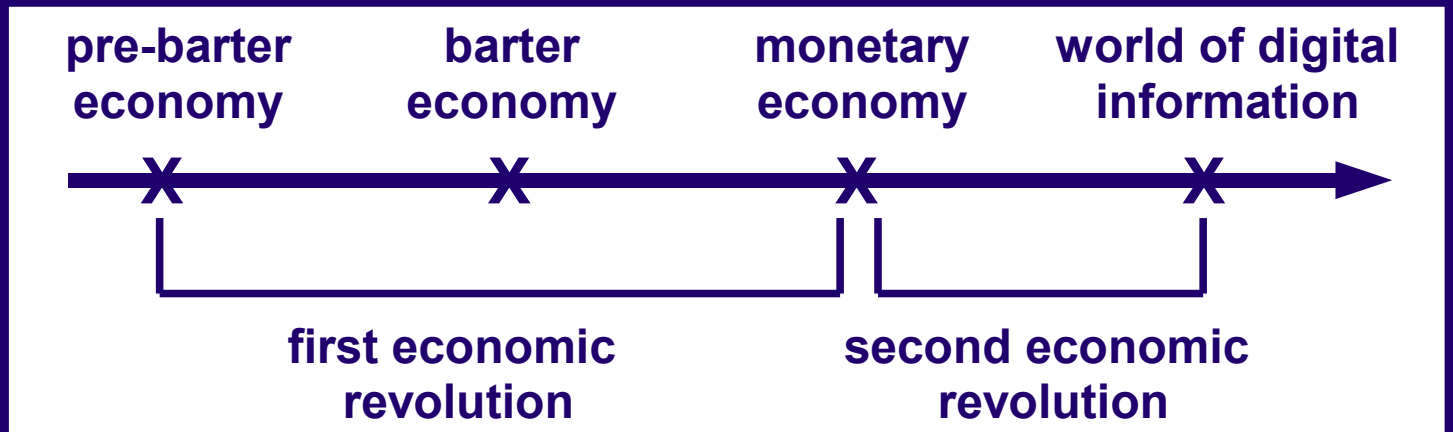
Appreciative comments I

- The paper is easy to read.
- The authors pointed out many differences between tangible goods and digital information. Have you thought about these differences?

Digital information	Tangible goods
more than one person can possess it – same quality	only one person can possess it.
if digital information is stolen we may not know it	it is obvious if tangible goods are stolen
mass-replication	mass-production
usage of a single channel for different types of digital information – e.g. internet	separate conduits for different goods – e.g. electricity, gas and water

Appreciative comments II

- It was impressive to see which vision the authors had almost 20 years ago and how they tried to convince the reader that superdistribution has to be the electronic infrastructure for the economy of the future.



The information-driven society of the future has to solve the problem of ensuring that the creators of digital information get credited for their work
=> Superdistribution

Question

Do you think that superdistribution can solve the described problem?

How long will it take to reach the world of digital information?