

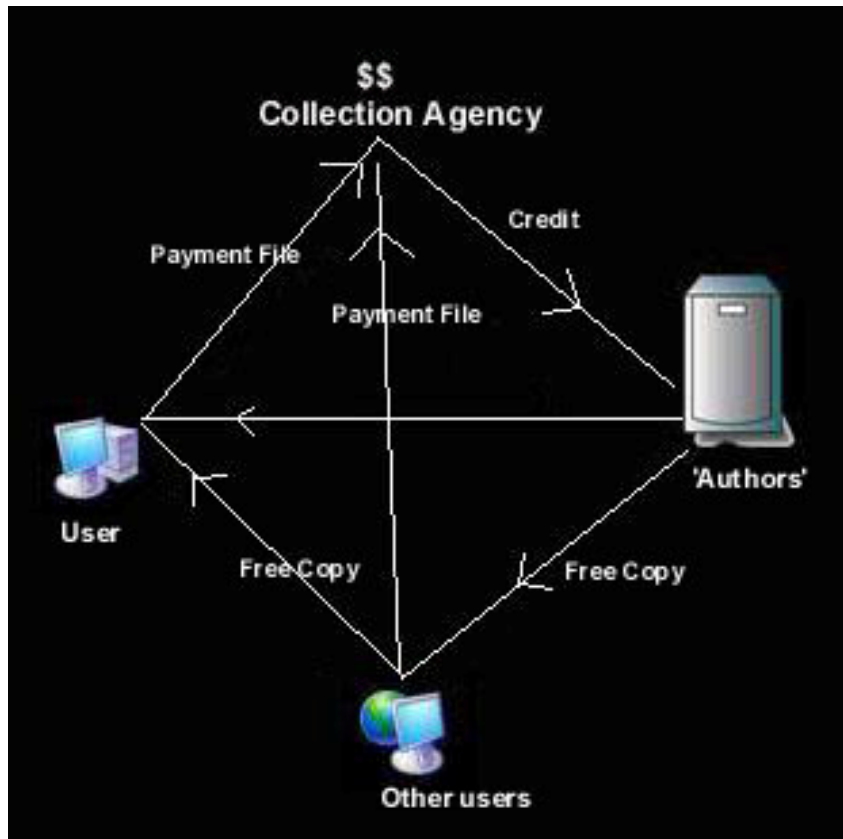


# **Superdistribution: An Electronic Infrastructure for the Economy of the Future**

Ryoichi Mori and Masaji Kawahara  
Transactions of Information Processing  
Society of Japan 38:7,  
pages 1465-1472, July 1997

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# Brief Overview



Users can obtain a 'copy' of the information freely.

They pay for the usage of the information

User's System + SDLR

SDLR monitors Terms and Conditions and the usage fees

Small collection fees, **no** distribution fees

*“Superdistribution is a technology and a system of economic, contractual and social arrangements for supplying and distributing digital information.”*



# Critical Comments

## Economic Design I

“Overhead costs of the superdistribution system are minimal. In particular, authors pay nothing for distribution and only a tiny amount for fee collection.”

- Overhead costs for the users are higher
- SDLR – an additional cost



# Critical Comments

## Economic Design II

“Superdistribution does not affect the fixed costs of a product, such as program development. But by increasing the number of units sold, superdistribution does reduce the fixed cost per unit.”

- is availability more important than utility to increase sales and thus reduce fixed costs?

*“..The two reductions working together are what makes superdistribution such a powerful idea.”*



# Critical Comments

## Privacy and Social Issues

“In particular, a user should be able to use the software anonymously as long as he or she pays the usage fee, or a software vendor should be able to limit use of the software to a specified list of users.”

- anonymity using credit cards?
- distinguish between anonymous users?
- consumer rights?



# Appreciative Comments

## Prototype Development

1986: Prototype I

- had overheads

1988: HSIC

- critical role in superdistribution

1989: Prototype II

- “a more practical superdistribution module, was developed.”



## Question

Can you think of any issues besides the ones discussed that Superdistribution did not revolutionize the information-age?



# References

R. Mori and M Kawahara, “Superdistribution: An Electronic Infrastructure for the Economy of the Future”, Transactions of Information Processing Society of Japan 38:7, 1465-1472, July 1997

<http://www.virtualschool.edu/mon/ElectronicProperty/MoriSuperdist.html>

<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/2.09/superdis.html>