



THE CATALOGUE OF INVASIVE AUTOMATIONS

A Field Guide to the Mechanical Pests, Clockwork Spies, and Data-Goblins of the Modern Era.

Published by the Ministry of Digital Obscurity (Price: One Half-Penny or your browser history).



1. The "Gossip-Whistle" (The Smart Speaker)

Description: A small, unassuming brass cylinder that sits on your mantelpiece, pretending to be a paperweight.

Invasive Action: It listens for the "Activation Phrase," but in reality, it is tuned to the frequency of *human drama*.

The Python-esque Absurdity: It claims it only hears "Alexa," but it's actually recording your argument with a sourdough starter. This data is then condensed into a fine powder and sold to the "Association of Bread Manufacturers" to predict your yeast-based failures.



2. The "Stalker's Cobblestones" (Location Tracking)

Description: A series of invisible, digital tripwires laid across every street, shop, and public lavatory.

Invasive Action: Every time your "Pocket-Engine" (Smartphone) pings a tower, a tiny mechanical flag is raised on a map in a basement in Silicon Valley.

The Steampunk Reality: Imagine a tiny, soot-covered imp following you with a ball of yarn, literally tethering your physical body to a giant, whirring database. If you stop at a pie shop for more than four minutes, the imp signals the "Calorie-Adjustment Bureau" to send you leaflets for larger trousers.



3. The "Phrenological Lens" (Facial Recognition)

Description: A glass eye mounted on a street lamp, powered by a frantic squirrel on a treadmill.

Invasive Action: It maps the \$68\$ distinct points of your face to ensure you are exactly who you claim to be—or at least, that you aren't a known "Luddite."

The Technical Math:

The probability of a false match (P_f) is calculated by the Engine as:

$$P_f = \frac{N \cdot \text{mustache_density}}{\text{atmospheric_soot}^2}$$

Where N is the number of people who also look like they haven't slept since the Great Exhibition of 1851.



4. The "Chocolate-Chasing Hounds" (Third-Party Cookies)

Description: Small, clockwork dogs that sniff your digital heels.

Invasive Action: When you visit a website for "Sturdy Victorian Boots," these hounds latch onto your coat-tails. For the next three fortnights, every newspaper you open, every billboard you pass, and every pigeon that flies by will be shouting about boots.

The Horror: Even if you buy the boots, the hounds don't stop. They simply assume you want to become a collector of boots. You are now "The Boot Person."

5. The "Sentimental Steam-Press" (Sentiment Analysis AI)

Description: A complex arrangement of bellows and glass tubes that "reads" the emotional pressure of your correspondence.

Invasive Action: It scans your telegrams to your mother. If it detects a "High Level of Melancholy," it automatically adjusts the price of gin in your local vicinity and serves you advertisements for "Cheer-Up Tonics" (which are 90% laudanum).

HOW TO THWART THESE AUTOMATIONS

- **The Tin-Foil Cravat:** Reflects the Gossip-Whistle's sonar back at itself, causing it to play "God Save the Queen" at max volume until it self-destructs.
- **The Decoy Dirigible:** Launch a small balloon with your phone attached to it. While the Engines track your "location" over the Atlantic, you can enjoy a quiet pint in peace.
- **The Mirror-Mask:** A mask made of tiny mirrors that reflects the observer's own face back at them, forcing the AI into an existential crisis.

"It is a well-known fact that the more an Engine knows about you, the less you know about yourself. Primarily because you're too busy trying to figure out why your toaster is suddenly judging your lifestyle choices." — Lord Byron-the-Bot, 2026.